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*THE CARDINAL VIRTUES*

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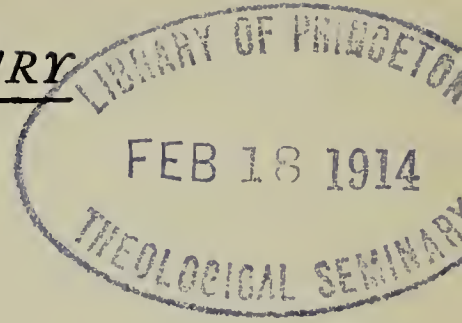
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CARDINAL VIRTUES

BY THE

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REV. W. C. E. NEWBOLT

CANON AND CHANCELLOR OF S. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, ETC.

HODDER AND STOUGHTON

LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO



## PREFACE

THIS volume consists of sermons delivered at S. Paul's during the preacher's months of residence.

The first four, which give the title to the book, deal with those great virtues which are at the bottom of all systems of morality; and are called "cardinal" in contradistinction to the three theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity.

The other sermons have to deal with subjects either of special interest to men of this generation, as, *e.g.*, the beginning of the New Century, or the Coronation of King Edward VII., or with subjects of such permanent importance as the life and opportunities of a great city. The reader must bear in mind that sermons have a special characteristic of their own, *viz.*, to arrest

attention and interest a mixed audience, as well as to teach great truths of religion to those who are willing to hear. And as sermons, not as essays, they are submitted by the preacher to a wider audience than can be reached from the pulpit, with an earnest hope that their defects may be overlooked, and their aim recognised in preparing, however imperfectly, the way of the Lord in the hearts of His faithful people.

W. C. E. N.

3, AMEN COURT, E.C.,  
*March 30, 1903.*



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I  
TEMPERANCE



# I

## TEMPERANCE

A SERMON PREACHED IN S. PAUL'S  
CATHEDRAL IN AUGUST, 1900.

“And if a man love righteousness, her labours are virtues: for she teacheth temperance and prudence, justice and fortitude: which are such things, as men can have nothing more profitable in their life.”—WISDOM viii. 7.

WHAT a wonderful world this is as the child of God takes his first tottering steps out into it! What a perplexing world he finds it before he has gone very far! The hand which he stretches out to caress is scratched and torn; the sun which cheered him with its brilliant expanse of light smites him by day, the moon smites him by night. The fruits which look so tempting, poison as well as feed, are bitter as well as sweet. A mystery hangs over creation, it is a puzzle to which he has no key; he buys experience at a heavy cost, and learns that he must move, and walk, and touch, and taste only with caution and constant care.

It is so with the fuller world which opens out to him as a man, through the paths of perception, intellect, and experiment. He pursues a road littered with failures, and lined with the sick and wounded who have sunk down only to die. The literature of the world, its proverbs, its sayings, are full of the puzzle, the pain, the disappointment, the anger that a world which looks so fair, and promises so much, should strike without warning, poison with such sweetness, and kill with such heartlessness. The inspired apostle, as he looked out over creation, saw all things as it were with upturned head, waiting for the reproach of failure and misery to be rolled away from them. "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope."<sup>1</sup>

And so we shall find different attitudes adopted towards the world by those who knew its fascinations and dreaded its assaults. There have been men, there are now, who have stood outside it altogether as far as it is possible for a man to do so. Philosophers, who have spurned with scorn things which could be so treacherous, and which offered so

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 20.

little real satisfaction; hermits who have gone away to their caves in the mountains saying, If we are to live in the world, at least it must be made a place where a man can live decently without constant fear of corruption. "To despise the world, to despise no one, to despise self, to despise being despised, these are four good things," so ran the old legend.

But there were others who knew that their lot was cast in this world, and that they must live in it, if not of it, and win the prize of victory out of its conflicts, and be hardened by its buffets, and braced by its disappointments, and they pointed out and elaborated certain precautions and methods which a good man was bound to take, not only if he wished to avoid evil, but also if he wished to gain to himself good out of the contact with evil. The experience of mankind pointed out four main attitudes to be assumed, four great virtues to be acquired, four potent habits to be mastered, which are famous in ancient systems, and which Christianity itself has taken over and amplified. They are those which the author of the Book of Wisdom has also specified as the fruit of wisdom—Temperance, Prudence, Justice, and Fortitude.

These are well known as the four cardinal virtues—virtues, that is, on which a man's

life is hinged, virtues which help a man to govern his actions in view of the temptations, difficulties, and dangers which beset his journey through the world.

Temperance teaches him the child's first lesson, not to touch. Prudence teaches him how to avoid moral blunders and the taking of wrong paths. Justice teaches him that he is not the only man in the world, that there are others who have rights in it as well as he; while Fortitude tells him that many of the obstacles which he meets are not there merely to bar his progress, but are set to divert the stream of his life into fresh channels of usefulness. Without some such virtues, which the wisdom and experience of men were guided by God to discover, it would be impossible to pass through the world unscathed, or to attain to that perfection which God designs for His children.

These solid virtues are as necessary to-day, dear brethren, as they ever were; Christianity has but elevated them, and made them more easy of attainment than they were before. It was the great aim of Christ's religion to roll away the reproach which vitiated the best efforts of the heathen world, that they knew what was right and did what was wrong; that with high precepts they had but indifferent practice. The Gospel supplied to



men the means of reaching the heights which appeared to be inaccessible before; and availed not merely to show men what was right, but to help them until, by the gifts of grace, they were able to reach it.

## I.

Now Temperance is a virtue which needs to be reclaimed and restored to its true position. It is quite true that by reason of centuries of bad habit, we in these northern islands have followed for so many years the vicious habit of excess in the use of intoxicating drinks, that we have become terrified, as well we might, at the moral, physical, and spiritual havoc that this one sin is working amongst us. The governors of our gaols, the doctors in our hospitals, those who have care of asylums, the clergy, the magistrates, those who know anything of the state of their fellow-men combine in saying that the sin of drunkenness is the national besetting sin, and the most terrible curse which is devastating our land. And in view of this great and admitted evil, Temperance, as a word, is generally confined to self-restraint in the use of intoxicants, amounting to abstaining from them altogether. Tem-

perance is this, but it is much more. We must rescue it from such a partial and limited use to its true meaning as governing all a man's actions, not regulating his dealings only with one particular form of temptation.

Temperance is, as I ventured to say just now, the virtue which enables a man as he passes through the world not to touch. He is surrounded with temptations to self-indulgence, temperance tells him at once, the when, the how, the how much, the how long, what to take, and what to avoid. Is he tempted to hasty speech? Temperance puts a bridle on his lips. Is he tempted to indulge evil passion? Temperance controls him. Is he tempted to misuse his appetites? Temperance shows him their proper and legitimate use, and rigidly restrains all that exceeds that use. So that it is a master virtue. You will need it, dear brethren, just as much as the poor drunkard needs it, in the quiet simplicity of your every-day life. Don't let us imitate the Pharisee once more: "God, I thank Thee that I am not as this drunkard, this degraded slave to his appetite." Perhaps that has not been your temptation, perhaps God has mercifully shielded you from it. What of the inward purity of your life? What of the disabling ease and selfish indulgence which so ruins

and disfigures our Christian profession? What of our hasty words, our greediness, our selfishness? Ah! dear brethren, we are all too much like children, who cry for all that they see, and stretch out greedy hands for all that they can get; who, if they dread the fire, dread it because they have been burned; who, if they are shy of evil, are shy because they have been bit, and find it the best policy to keep to the paths of integrity. Temperance is a great virtue, a cardinal virtue, which helps a man to keep himself in check on principle, and to move amidst all the manifold riches of the world with the liberty and ease which belong to a man who can taste or not taste, use or not use, take or leave alone, with a freedom and certainty which characterize the man who reigns supreme within the circle of his own life.

“ Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control.  
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.  
Yet not for power (power of herself  
Would come uncall'd for), but to live by law,  
Acting the law we live by without fear :  
And because right is right, to follow right  
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.”

Let us rescue Temperance from its partial meaning and its limited significance until we find in it the first of those cardinal virtues,

which bear up the integrity of life, as it moves among forces which might shatter and disintegrate it, with the treacherous connivance of unbridled desire.

## II.

There are certain well-defined stages in the development of Temperance which we should do well to consider. For let no one believe for one moment that a virtue like this grows up in us without effort, or is inherited with transmitted qualities. Human nature is the same wherever we find it. Where every living thing, if left to itself, may do one of three things, either stay as it is or get better or get worse. Human nature, if left undirected and undeveloped, by a law of degeneration, tends to become gradually but inevitably worse.<sup>1</sup> Passions will not mind themselves, inclinations to evil will not pass away with our advanced growth. Every one who possesses the unspeakable blessing of Temperance, or the noble faculty of self-restraint in the proper regulation of desire, has learned by many a struggle and many a hard-fought combat the strength of passion

<sup>1</sup> See Drummond, "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," Degeneration.

and the effort required to assert the supremacy of the will. He has known what it is to feel the murderous onslaught threatening to sweep him away; he has known what forces he can summon to his aid, and the certainty of victory and salvation to those who endure to the end. And therefore to him who would possess the virtue of Temperance there comes first of all this message to the soul, which the ancient world received as an oracle from Heaven, "Know thyself." Self-knowledge is one real step towards the attainment of true Temperance.

My brethren, we vary our moods from time to time, now we are vaunting our powers and glorying in the possibilities of almost infinite development and progress. "Lord, what is man?" we say with wonder and admiration; while at another time we are humbled to the dust by the spectacle of passion overmastering reason, pushing aside prudence, scattering to the winds the endowments which education has contributed; and we say, "Lord, what is man?" Was there ever a living being so uncontrolled, so capable of degradation, so mad in his frenzied rush after evil gratification? My brethren, it is a great moral help to know ourselves, to know our history, to know our constituent elements, to know the ills to which we are exposed, and the Divine help

which it is ours to welcome. "Know thyself." It is a great help to Temperance. A voice within is ever whispering : Man is frail, everyone around you is tainted and vitiated in some way or another by contact with the world. You cannot struggle against nature ; to curb the horse of desire is only to make it restive, and to precipitate the catastrophe which is bound to come. It is by gently yielding that the final peace will come, not by a stubborn resistance to the inevitable. How many a man is beaten down by that sophistry, until, instead of managing and ruling the passions, his passions rule him ! A little self-knowledge, a little acquaintance with his own history, will show him that nature does not mean the same thing everywhere, that the nature of plants is one thing, of the lower animals is another thing, while the nature of man stands out as a thing by itself. Man is a free state in a land of despotisms. Man has a ruling power within him known as reason, which is designed to be and is absolutely free. No allurements of this world can force a man to yield to it, unless his will gives consent. No coercion of superior force can overrule a man's reason, unless his will first consents. Further, the great God Himself wills not to force man to attain even to his highest good. He puts before him life and

death, blessing and cursing, but the man must choose. What an immense step towards true Temperance it is to know this! All these rebellious passions which clamour for gratification, all these allurements which demand that I should yield to them, all the clamour of corrupt public opinion which demands that I should bow to it, can all be met, subdued, and dispersed by a sanctified reason and a firm will.

It is possible that I am speaking to-day to some one who is being carried along, a slave to some sin from which he longs to be free. He has got now into a state of despair; he believes that he cannot help it, and he consoles himself by seeing other slaves at his side. I think one of the most ironical and sad spectacles in the recent rejoicings for deliverance and victory was to see masses of men degrading themselves by excess and shouting, "Britons never will be slaves!" Ah! if we knew ourselves enough to be able to feel that a Christian never can be a slave, that he was born to rule, and must rule, it would liberate many a captive and emancipate many a bond-servant. It is being freely discussed now as to whether or not it is desirable to warn young people beforehand in a definite way of the dangers that must inevitably cross their path. It is a question beset with difficulties, and, in

view of the priceless and irreparable value of innocence where it can be maintained, a question which can only be entertained as the lesser of two evils ; but at the same time there is no doubt that a wise estimate of our own peculiar dangers, a prudent calculation of our force, and a just appreciation of the enemy's real strength would help a man. Courage! After all, no temptation has overtaken you but that which is common to man. God Himself, out of the temptation, and by means of it, will provide the way of escape. Courage! because you are a man, because God has given you a sovereign reason, and bidden you reign supreme over your enemies. Courage! even in front of hereditary weakness, in the face of that affinity to sin which you know you have inherited. Perhaps the right hand must come off, perhaps the right eye must be plucked out. Still courage! because He made you. It is God that made you. "He knoweth whereof we are made. He remembereth that we are but dust." Courage! because grace is stronger than nature. To know myself is to know that I have that nature which He for ever dignified by the Incarnation. It is to know that God is almighty, and that the omnipotence of God does not stop short, baffled by human passions.

After "know thyself," Temperance calls to



us from her pure height, and says, "Control thyself." Certainly the most superficial introspective glance will show us the tremendous power of the forces which rage within us. Reputations have been lost, fortunes have been dissipated, health wrecked—yes, cities destroyed, by reason of a wandering and rebellious desire. It is a motley crew, full of dangerous energy, and ripe for rebellion, that passes beneath the sovereign throne of the will which is set to rule within a man the passions, desires, and forces which are there for his completeness and for the fulfilment of his mission. My brethren, have we yet mastered this great stage in the development of Temperance known as self-control? Does anything pass within the portals of your heart of which the will has no cognisance, or is powerless to resist? You remember how the Apostle spoke of a self-control which brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

There are many checks, thank God! placed by public opinion, by civilisation, by society, whatever you like to call it, on the unbridled exercise of our likes and dislikes, our passions and desires. There is what we may call the ritual of propriety which fences round the freedom of social intercourse. A man must choose his words, must be respectful in his

actions, must regard prejudices, obey the rules of etiquette, be orderly and well behaved. And it is difficult to over-estimate the importance of all this as a safeguard of greater things. It is a bad thing for a nation when it allows itself to break down the proprieties of social life. Degradation of morals filters through with alarming rapidity from the stage-play which allows itself to tear away the screen of propriety, and scatters it contemptuously to the winds as prudery; a strong situation in a realistic novel means a great deal more than a shock to the artistic sense or the religious feeling of good men; it is again an attempt to pluck away the barrier of propriety. Free-and-easy manners, loose banter, coarse slang, unmannerly behaviour—these are not a return to real life uncorrupted by artificial distinctions and uninjured by pedantry; they are the deliberate destruction of the barriers set around good behaviour, the bulwarks of social discipline and the ritual of its inner life. Self-control within has lost a valuable ally and subsidiary help if it finds itself deserted by self-restraint without in the region of common life. But ritual is not religion, and social propriety is not self-control. Temperance is a great principle within the man; it means, as I have said, a setting the will upon a firm throne, so that all life

goes forward on an even basis and with a fixed purpose, where nothing is rushed under the sudden influence of an impulse, nor the better overborne by the worse, nor reason clamoured down by passion, nor the body cramped by fear, nor ruined by indulgence, but all things are ordered and settled by an equitable rule.

My brethren, are we masters in our own house? Do we rule within the circle of our own homes? Have we mastered the true principles of self-control, so that passions and impulses assume their proper place under the guidance of the will? Self is a very wide empire; while we are holding the capital against deadly sin a fierce guerilla warfare may be raging in the outskirts of our life, whose issue we do not foresee, and whose danger we do not accurately forecast. That sin which does so easily beset us, which some day we are going to turn out, has every appearance of having come to stay. It is true it may be hidden, the flag is flying bravely over every fortress in our life: the world does not know that we have come to a secret understanding with just this one sin, which, after all, we must assume to exist in many cases besides our own. The will has an awkward knack of showing that it has been beaten in some direction, and is curtailed in the extent of its dominion. Vacillation, weak-

ness in the matter of principle, these betray the loss of perfect self-control. Ah, my brethren, as we look at the wide area over which we are called to rule, we may well feel anxious. Memory, with its dark record of defeats; imagination, with its treacherous fantasies and strange illusions; the five senses, with their ready service, need constant repression, and constant watchfulness. The tongue, again, is a region of difficulty sufficient to tax the effort of the strongest will in lessons of self-control. "If any man offend not in word," says St. James, "the same is a perfect man and able also to bridle the whole body." Self-control is no child's play, it reaches right away from our actions to the inmost recesses of the heart. But self-control stands in the very forefront of Temperance.

"Know thyself," "Control thyself"—these are good and essential, but, further, from her throne of excellence Temperance cries, "Deny thyself." The will must not wait to be attacked, the will must not wait to show that it is master in days of turbulence, and in the fierce blasts of passion. Before the attack comes, while all is peaceful, when no tempter is in sight, while all is calm, the will must exercise herself in her discipline by self-denial. The way to resist indulgence in things unlawful is to accustom the powers and faculties to

obedience in giving up even things lawful. This is no doctrine for a self-indulgent age, but it is sound doctrine for all that. There is a great dislike to anything like systematic fasting ; the fast of Lent, the weekly fast of Friday, and the other days of obligation have to plead hard for their observance and often to deaf ears. We may well be allowed to wonder whether, if fasting had taken its proper place, such severe repression would have been necessary in order to produce a proper attitude towards the desolating sin of drunkenness. However this may be, self-denial in things lawful, undertaken in the strength of God and in dependence on His will, does leave a man less exposed to the murderous assaults of appetite. He is less likely to be allured and entrapped into what is wrong who shows that he can, where there is no prohibition, touch or not touch, taste or not taste, with absolute freedom in obedience to the dictates of the will.

So, dear brethren, see how our Blessed Lord insisted upon all His followers taking up the Cross. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me." There ought to be less of the free-and-easy life, less of the shrinking from hard things. The Devil trades largely upon the fact that men speak and act as

if the fact of the presence of a strong inclination necessitated its immediate gratification. To wish for a thing intensely is no reason why it should be necessary immediately to satisfy that wish. Rather the mere fact of the existence of a strong desire should put a man on his guard, lest the will should be forced, and passion reign in the place of reason. A man once asked his spiritual adviser what was the meaning of "dying unto sin," and he was told in a symbolical manner that it was to behave like a dead man in the presence of that which moves or excites to sin. Thus, self-denial disciplines all the rebellious forces, brings them under the power of reason, so that when passion calls there is no response, when temptation allures there is no wavering of allegiance. The temperate man has reckoned with all the forces of his being. He knows himself. He has learned to correct every impulse and to steady every desire under the assaults of passion. And to this end, while the battle still threatens only at a distance, in the quiet, uneventful scenes of his everyday life, he has learned the discipline which comes from Self-denial and the power of well-regulated desire. So that the will, in great things as in little, reigns supreme within the circle of her own dominion.

Christ our Lord and Master, when He came

on earth and set forth the scheme of Divine sanctification, recognised and accepted these masculine virtues as the foundation of even higher excellences. But He did more; He made them possible, not only for grand heroic natures, but for every one. Every one who submits himself to the rule of Christ may find for himself that which will secure to him the full power of resistance and defence which is needed for the battle of life. To every Christian is given not only to admire Temperance from afar, but to be temperate. We know it already, but it needs again and again insisting on. The wayward taint of hereditary weakness, all the difficulties of temperament, all the paralysing predisposition to evil which belong to a fallen nature, are met and rectified in Holy Baptism. "Ye must be born again." This is Christ's message to the man who despairs of human nature and is paralysed by inherited sin. When the strong gusts of passion now wax fierce, and temptation riots along like a whirlwind; when every fresh blast threatens to beat down into the dust the faint virtue, and the weak growth of holiness, fresh grace is promised in the ordinance of Confirmation. This is no renewing of vows in a spirit of defiance, but a renewing of strength given to those who are willing to wait upon God and renew their allegiance. So every fresh

canker which springs up in the tender life may be cut away in penitence, and life be restored in earnest amendment. So to him who is alive unto God fresh stores of grace and strength are given in Holy Communion, until the attractiveness of what is good drives out the fascination of what is evil; until the time comes when the desire for goodness and righteousness surpasses the thirst of the drunkard or the desire of the sensualist for what is evil. Temperance in the fostering hand of Christ becomes not only a possibility, but it becomes alive with fresh beauty, and fulfilled with fresh power.

Cease not your efforts, dear brethren, until you have attained this master virtue. Only with its restraining power strong upon us can we venture upon the dangerous luxuries of an ever-increasing prosperity. As fresh treasures, fresh fascinations open up before you, "know thyself"; know whether they are for you, or whether from the circumstances of your history or the weakness of your will you must push them on one side. "Control thyself"; do not allow even a good thing to be forced upon you, unless your will and reason have first consented, so that you be not enriched even, at the price of liberty. "Deny thyself." The Cross, after all, is the symbol of victory for the Christian in this and by this he will con-



quer. It is the man who by long discipline and by the power of grace has trained his passions, exercised his senses, and curbed his desires, who will reap in all its fulness the blessing which belongs to him who is temperate in all things.

We meet together, dear brethren, amidst clouds and gloom which seem to envelope the world. In China, perhaps, at this very moment the fate of many hundred Europeans and native Christians hangs in the balance. In South Africa the long war still smoulders on. The traveller who leaves our shores for his summer holiday will find three nations in mourning : here in England, all up the Rhine, in sunny Italy, the drooping flag and the national mourning exhibit the same signs of woe. We have learned here in England to feel as a personal sorrow anything that affects the happiness of our beloved Queen, and we mourn with her for one more loss in that family which has always appealed to our most cherished English traditions. Happy shall we be, if we lay to heart the deeper lessons of these times of sorrow, and learn, as we pass through this world, that here we have no continuing city but seek one to come. And strong in the great virtue of Temperance, learn to use this world as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passeth away.



II

PRUDENCE



## II

### PRUDENCE

#### A SERMON PREACHED IN S. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL IN AUGUST, 1900.

“And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.”—  
S. LUKE xvi. 8.

BESIDES Temperance, which we considered last Sunday, there stands out another dominant virtue, without which human nature fails of its highest perfection, and that is Prudence. The man of the world knows the advantage of this virtue in business, more perhaps than we know its value in the regulation of the affairs of our inner life. A long-headed man; who is not easily taken in; who is practical, cautious, and undemonstrative; who never trusts himself an inch beyond the fair limits of safety, who can be neither flattered nor frightened, he is more trusted than the brilliant experimentalist

who makes great discoveries, but who may also make great mistakes, who is led away by enthusiasm into positions which he cannot hold, and is led to trust where he ought to have suspected, and to risk where he ought to have held his hand.

It is the prudent man who pushes his way to the highest positions of commercial prosperity, and wins and holds posts by calculation, which his more brilliant neighbour has captured and lost again by rashness and want of method.

We do not, however, always pause to see the absolute necessity there is for Prudence in the guiding and directing of the more serious concerns of human life. The world being what it is, a man has little chance of passing through its troublesome waves who has not learned the Heaven-given lesson of prudence

So necessary is it, that our Lord bids us study it from the tactics of the enemy.

Just as our army in the field has had to learn how to take cover as well as how to advance; how to practise the sort of strata-gem which the country demands in which they are fighting, and to study the successful methods of those who are set against them, so, in our spiritual warfare, we may study with advantage the eagerness, skill, and

cleverness of those who are organised for our destruction, and also note with wonder, and imitate where we can, the practical prudence of those who, having made a definite study of what leads to worldly success, have at whatever cost, and with whatever sacrifice, devoted themselves to the realisation of that which they proposed.

## I.

What is Prudence? Prudence is that virtue which enables a man to make a good choice in all matters that concern his real good. And you will notice these facts as worthy of our consideration, that where we talk of good and bad God sometimes talks of wise and foolish; that the fool of the Psalmist and the fool of the Book of Proverbs represents a character who is a great deal more than the intellectually deficient or the mentally weak man. And, further, that of the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit, which we received at our Baptism and again at our Confirmation, four have to do with knowledge in some form or another—wisdom, which helps a man to reach out to the highest aims which can be put before him; understanding, or intelligence, which represents a

kind of spiritualised instinct ; counsel, which is the power of choosing between the good and the better, after deliberation ; and knowledge, which is a Divine gift of that which God has been pleased to impart in His various modes of revelation.

All these things seem to point to the conclusion that there is little chance, in a complex world like this, for a man who hopes simply to blunder on his way, with no conception of whither he is going, with no realisation of the dangers which beset his path, without knowing where to rest, or where to turn for food or protection, without power of discerning between the right road and the wrong, or the good or the better, the high or the highest. For a man who does this contemptuously puts on one side all that has been done to help him. God's two Books of Revelation and experience lie unopened. The storehouses are provided in vain, and the guides stand unemployed and distrusted.

Much harm has been done in the world by ignorant men, perhaps more harm has been done still by weak men ; but great and pitiable harm is being done by stupid men—men who lie tossing like a derelict on the tide, themselves speedily to become a wreck, but in the meantime a hindrance and a menace to all who pass by on the busy waterway of life.



## II.

Prudence is not the prosaic virtue of the cautious and timid, of those whom the Italian poet saw outside the limits of hell, not daring enough to sin, not adventurous enough for deeds of virtue, "men who lived without infamy and without praise"; but it is a virtue which reaches right up into the highest regions of intellectual and spiritual action.

1. It must be the common experience of many of us that we have in our daily life to take for granted many things which we do not stop to prove and are not always capable of proving. We believe, and we act on the belief, although, perhaps, we should be able only imperfectly to set forth the grounds of it, that by the law of gravitation we should fall to the ground if we stepped off the dome of this cathedral. We accepted with unhesitating confidence a few months ago the statement of the astronomer that the sun would be eclipsed on such a day and at such an hour, although, if asked, we should have been able to give only a sorry account of the reasons which induced us to accept that assurance. We think a man an intellectual fanatic who is anxious to demonstrate that

the world is not round, even although our arguments against him are deficient in scientific accuracy. So in the affairs of daily life, we act on the collected experience of those who are masters in their different professions; as a layman we feel disqualified from contradicting a professional in his own line, and feel that our soundest policy is to consult those who know best, and to act on their advice. And, therefore, it would seem that in the highest of all spheres of knowledge, in the things which concern a man's relations to God, it would be desirable not to act hurriedly or on our own impression, in the face of the collected experience and wisdom of mankind. It is here that we see one function of the great virtue "Prudence." If I find it difficult to believe this or that, at least I cannot dismiss with a light heart all that has been said about it, or the common tradition of mankind; at least it may be prudent to act as if there was a God, as if there were Heaven, as if there were Hell, until more light is vouchsafed to me. Surely Prudence would say to fathers and mothers of children, do not consult your children as to whether or not they will say their prayers, or be taught the great doctrines of the Faith, or read the Bible, or go to church. Say to them instead, "You must act for a time on

the belief that what the tradition of the best men has handed down to you, and the authority of those best qualified to know has committed to you, is true. It is not safe, it is not wise, to disregard it, and in process of time you will be able to see for yourselves whether you submit or withhold the acquiescence of your conviction."

We see around us at the present time a perfect sea of controversy; there is nothing disquieting in that fact taken by itself. The disturbing element is this, that passion is made to do duty for proof, and denunciation for argument, and things are not decided on their merits. Surely Prudence meets us here and says, Here is a belief which is held by thousands of thinking men at the present day; it has been held by thousands of thinking men in all ages of the Church. Is it likely that there should be no truth in it? Is it likely that there should have been a conspiracy to believe what a child could point out to be demonstrably false? Here am I, perhaps, a man who imperfectly knows one language, with no insight into history, with no grasp of theology, who barely knows the meaning of the terms or the history of the controversy. Is it likely that truth will lie altogether and entirely on my side? Here is one saying that on the summit of yonder high

mountain there is a glorious prospect over sea and land, with all the beauties of heaven opening out before the wondering eye. And here I stand in the fog and mist at the bottom and say, "No, there can be no prospect up there; it is impossible that you can see any. I denounce you as a fool and a fanatic." Does not prudence say rather, "Listen to his voice, hearken to what he says. He only bids you 'come and see,' when you have climbed the mountain, when you have looked over the distance and tried to see what he sees, then you may begin to denounce if you wish, and if you can. Then there will be time enough to decry sacramental grace, or conversion, or Absolution, or justification, or the Bible, or the Church." Prudence says, 'only the fanatic decries what he knows nothing of, and has never striven to comprehend.' Anything whatever which has at any time commanded the earnest assent of large numbers of mankind, even if it be the wild superstition of the heathen, merits respectful investigation and careful study. Most certainly no one can afford to neglect the long ages of unbroken Christian tradition, nor dispose of with an epigram, or demolish with a sneer, the splendid endowment of the ages of faith. Christian prudence knows that God has spoken by divers portions and in

divers manners, and in an age of strife is most fearful of these two things, first, lest in controversy we should forget the all-essential element of Christian love, and secondly, lest in demolishing a controversial antagonist we be found haply fighting against God.

2. But it is rather in the guidance of our moral life that we look for the more characteristic exhibition of the virtue of Prudence. I suppose we all of us have been struck from time to time with the extreme stupidity and folly of a life of reckless sin. Here is a man ruining his health by excess in drink; is he happy? Clearly not. Does he know that he is killing himself by inches? Presumably. Then why does he do it? He says he cannot help it. Here is a man made in the image and likeness of God leading a life lower than any beast that perishes. Does he know that the purer qualities of his intellect are being impaired? He cannot fail to do so. Does he see that light and beauty have died out of the world for him, and that, like Solomon, his sun is setting in a moral night? Alas! it is too obvious that he was not meant to satisfy himself with the husks of swine. Here is one plunging into a course of gambling, with a restless intoxication, waiting for the chance which is to make his fortune, and

the clever stroke which is to save him from ruin. Does he know that these never come? Does he know that the whole history of such transactions is against him? He cannot fail to do so. But he is blind, and cannot see afar off. Perhaps he, too, says he cannot help himself, as he struggles in the net laid privily for him, and entangles himself the tighter by the agony of his struggles. Wise men mourn over the follies of youth, cynics smile at them, the good try to save them from their consequences. But in those who wait upon God and seek for His guidance, who are resolute and earnest in dealing with themselves, there is formed that virtue of Prudence which saves the blunder and wards off the fault, which helps a man to value men and things aright, to know his own weakness and his own strength, to know what he can do and what he must avoid. Prudence as a moral guide within the soul sets up the inestimable strength of principle.

The man of principle who not only knows what to do, but why he does it, is saved from countless follies and blunders, which lead through sin to loss and spiritual suffering. A man of principle can be trusted to hold his own even in the most adverse surroundings, a man who is deficient in this saving virtue can be trusted nowhere.

Joseph, because he had principle, was safe in all the seductive dangers of an Egyptian palace; Judas, because he failed in this respect, was lost under the very eye and guidance of Christ. Let us make up our minds, brethren, once for all, that we cannot hope to pass unscathed through the world without it. Prudence says to you, you must settle definitely with yourself how much attention you are going to pay to "what people say." If a thing is wrong in the country, it won't be right in London; if a thing is wrong at home in the society of your mother and sisters, it won't be right when you come to business. If it is wrong to condemn Christ, the fact that Tiberius threatens to banish you will not make it right. If you believed that Jesus has opened your eyes, it cannot be right to deny His claims upon you, because not to do so may involve social or religious martyrdom. If you believe in the truth of a doctrine, no amount of popular clamour will make it untrue, and what a poor thing popular clamour is after all. Remember that four of the things which popular clamour denounced in London in our Churches forty years ago were the weekly offertory, turning to the East at the Creed, the use of the surplice in the pulpit, and singing the responses

to the Commandments. Respect for popular clamour is a very poor substitute for principle.

Prudence says to you again, you must make up your mind as to your attitude towards religion. Do you take Jesus Christ for your guide, or are you going to listen to whatever happens to be in vogue at the time? If Jesus Christ is to be your guide, then He must be followed utterly. He brooks no rival. He has a system of help devised for you, from your cradle to your grave. He tells you that He demands absolute obedience to all things which He has commanded you, that He is your Shepherd, your King, your Priest, your Prophet, your Saviour, and your God. To follow Him on principle is a very different thing from following Him when there is nothing to interfere with His commandments. His followers bear the Cross, they are sometimes hated of all men, they are gibbeted, persecuted, martyred, but they reign with Him in glory. We, all of us, admire this splendid building in which we are gathered to worship God: its cross towers above the city, its dome rises up like the mountain of God above its traffic and its life. Truly a magnificent monument to enshrine the name of any man! But remember that S. Paul was stricken to death in the capital city of the ancient world, as a male-



factor and an enemy of mankind, because his principles refused to allow him to deny Christ.

Prudence asks you once more what attitude are you going to take towards all the passions and desires which will clamour to be satisfied? The youth entering on life is like the tourist who lands on some foreign shore, who is met by touts of all kinds, all proffering help, all ready with advice, all seeking his patronage, and all demanding pay. The prudent tourist knows what he wants and where he is going, the ignorant and unwary fall a prey to their extortions. Is every wish to be gratified, if we have the means to do so? Is the pursuit of happiness to be our aim, or the pursuit of duty? Is sin a real danger, or only a theological bugbear? Is the flesh only an ugly name given by ascetics to human nature? Is the world only an ill-natured nickname for that which is opposed to ecclesiastical narrowness? Is the devil any more than the hero of fairy legend or the creation of monkish fancy? Of all these things, Prudence says, deliberate cognisance must be taken, and the soul must form principles, otherwise to drift on the smooth surface of this deadly current can have but one ending when the waters gather into the awful leap upon destruction, whose roar re-echoes through the records of history,

and whose froth and foam beat upon the face of the sinner, borne on the wings of mournful foreboding, and in the premonitions of approaching doom.

Principle is the saving of a man who has listened to the voice of Prudence, and there are several things which Prudence uses to strengthen principle as a policy of life.

There is conscience, for instance, which unless it has been impaired, or kept un-instructed, or otherwise neglected, acts as a constant guard in maintaining the integrity of principle. A man who lives on principle brings everything before the bar of conscience and acts in accordance with the direction of that heaven-sent monitor; and just as pain has its distinct uses in warning a man of the approach of evil against which he may take precautions and provision, so the conscience, with its sensitive smart, warns at the approach of evil the heart which might otherwise become injured. "This is of the world, this is contrary to the principles of a Christian; this is a snare of the flesh which could only lead to the break-up of the dignity of life; this comes from the malice of the Devil, and must be discarded by one who is an heir of salvation."

And, then, besides conscience prudence points out the advantage of direct guidance

such as is to be found in the world. It was designed apparently by Almighty God that the one virtue which should introduce us into the fulness of life's blessings should be obedience. When parents and teachers do their duty, the child, leaning on obedience, would already have passed through some of the great difficulties of life, before he was left to fight his own battles and meet his own enemies.

Advice, it is true, has a bad name, because so many destroy the influence of what they say by the contradiction of what they do. Men expect from their advisers more than a sign-post, which is rooted in the ground, and only points to the right way, without entering upon it. "Do as I say" is not nearly so potent an influence as "Do as I do."

But still we may lament the folly of an age which is bent on buying for itself always and in every case the experience which it might very well have borrowed.

Why is it that the syrens of pleasure have still such power to lure generation after generation to the islands of destruction, where the whitening bones of victims still proclaim that the end of those things is death? Why does the youthful driver of the chariot of the sun still plunge, in spite of his father's warnings that he cannot control

those fiery steeds by his own strength, and burn, and waste and destroy in a life of dissipation and ruin? Prudence says with no uncertain voice, "Fools despise wisdom and instruction." It is not the wise man, after all, who neglects advice and disdains to use it, and contempt of instruction is not a sign of healthy independence, but of folly. Every one, for instance, is the better for listening to good public opinion whether it comes to us in the common tradition of mankind or in the social maxims, the refinements, the restraints, the rules which form the unwritten code which govern public conduct. Think only of those maxims of prudence known as proverbs, "the wisdom of many and the wit of one," as they have been called. Here are certain maxims of collected experiences which a prudent man will take as the very axioms of moral action. "Though hand join in hand the wicked shall not be unpunished" is the united voice of all generations of men protesting against the haphazard folly of the man who thinks that in his case there is going to be an exception, that he can sin and return again to the position in which he was before, and take up life just as he left it, that Divine wrath has somehow been swallowed up in mercy, and that the sinner, like a spoiled child, can

coax a yielding father into the relaxation of penalties and the abrogation of justice. In vain for him has the consciousness of the ancient world armed Nemesis with its hands of iron, albeit her feet are of lead; in vain for him have the great poets weaved their splendid conception of unerring retribution, pursuing the sinner with red-handed vengeance, until he wakes up to find that not even a mistake is passed over without its necessary consequence in the great scheme of God's justice, that not even a David, penitent and forgiven, can obtain the sheathing of the sword, which is never again to depart from his house, that not even the Son of God can afford to cast Himself down, trusting in angels who wait upon obedience but disdain presumption.

Here is a man who, knowing the universal testimony of experience that dishonesty defeats its own ends, is yet risking it in his own case, confident in the exception that is to be made in his favour. Here is the man doing the minimum of evil to ensure the maximum of good; it is in a righteous cause, and evil is robbed of its malignity, and truth abounds by his lie. And all too late he wakes up to find that the world was right and he was wrong; dishonesty always trips itself up in the end, and the moral lie has a power to

shatter the truth which is enwrapped in it with a startling and surprising force.

Deride the eccentricities of fashion as we may, decry the hollowness of social etiquette, and the fickleness of public opinion, still in the higher social standard, in the verdict of propriety, in the conventional standards which govern conduct, a prudent man will be conscious of a support which he would be unwise to discard. The desire not to fall below the ordinary level of respectability, the determination not to outrage in any way public opinion may be but a slender and superficial support on which to base a man's integrity, but for all that to learn to respect barriers, to put our shoes from off our feet in the presence of mysteries, to recognise the outer safeguards of inward truth are all things which a prudent man will thankfully accept. For, after all, a man is one step further removed from the dangers of licence who besides the inner restraints of his own will is also kept back by the outward barriers of good custom from situations of danger and difficulty. Good advice, however it comes, directly or indirectly, is not a thing to be neglected by a prudent man.

And here I would venture to put in a word for sermons. There are not wanting signs that a reaction is setting in against sermons.

Only a few years ago it might have been said without fear of contradiction that there were three things which English people firmly believed in, viz., Sunday, the Bible, and hearing sermons. They are fast beginning to disbelieve in all three. In most churches when the sermon is commenced—at all events in towns—there is a steady movement towards the door, not of invalids, or of very busy people, or of learned men who gain their knowledge elsewhere, but of young people who simply dislike the fatigue of listening, of those who are quite uninstructed in the faith, and miss their weekly lesson.

Remember children are being less and less taught religion at school, when called upon to hear sermons they rebel; they read little or no doctrinal or spiritual books. And here, again, as in school, so in church, a blow is being struck at religious instruction. And then we wonder at the strange letters which are written, the strange speeches which are made, the ignorance of the most elementary truths which is displayed. Bad as the sermons may be, dear brethren, you may take it for granted that they are at least as good, and as profitable, as the half-hour's gossip which takes their place, the emptiness of the Sunday display, or the want of seriousness which refuses to be taught.

3. For Prudence is not concerned merely in keeping us out of mischief; Prudence bids us keep our eyes open to get what is truly good and noble out of our life in this world. "I do not wonder at what men suffer, but I wonder often at what they lose," says Mr. Ruskin. A prudent man in business is not merely the man who avoids catastrophes, but a man who never lets opportunities slip. Can we rest quite happy, without a suspicion that we are wrong, when we see people eagerly pursuing things in which we take no sort of interest, and can find no possible source of joy? "What can induce a man to become a missionary?" We say: "Fancy leaving London, leaving England, without any of the excitements and interests of life? What can influence a man to be a missionary?—Why, the fact that he has found in religion a pearl of great price, and he cannot rest until he has taught others where they can find the same, because he has learnt the secret of that in which true greatness exists, namely, in doing good. And that he has heard the voice of God saying to him, 'What good are you doing in the world for your fellow-creatures? Is one single person the better because you have lived?' And vocation, the call of God, cries to him to go out and carry to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.



That Bible which you neglect is full of treasures; is it prudent to neglect it? That Church which you despise is full of strength and comfort; is it wise to despise it? Life is stored for you with blessings and opportunities, but hedged round with difficulty and girded with pitfalls. Pray to God that He will give you Prudence. Prudence to trust where as yet you cannot see your way. Prudence to avoid danger, in obedience to the warnings which are given you. And Prudence to find and enjoy the spiritual stores which so bountifully enrich your life.



III  
JUSTICE



### III

## JUSTICE

A SERMON PREACHED IN S. PAUL'S  
CATHEDRAL IN AUGUST, 1900.

“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”—  
MICAH vi. 8.

THERE is one great virtue whose rugged magnificence claims almost universal homage even from those who are conspicuously deficient in it themselves, and that is Justice. In view of the wide possibilities of self-gratification, in view of the treasures which open out on every side, temptingly displayed within his grasp, man has to decide early, and he has to decide firmly, and he has to abide by his decision. What is my right to these things which are thus displayed all around me? Is it to be the law of might, to snatch what I can, and where I can? Is it to be the

calculating cunning of a Jacob, which will never lose an opportunity of adding to his store even from a hungry brother's recklessness, or a blind father's mistake? Or am I to safeguard the rights of others as I would my own? To recognise that even if I could, there are certain advantages which I must not take of another? That there are other people in the world besides myself whose rights I must respect and whose interests I must serve?

A man who has once endeavoured to regulate his actions in accordance with the will of God, has no doubt as to which of these answers he ought to give. There is set up within him a court of award before which every opportunity and advantage is brought. He governs his action, that is, in accordance with the principles of justice, what he ought to do and what right requires; not according to principles of a supposed self-interest, which ignores the claims of others, and reaches out after aggrandisement over the trampled form of another's rights,

Of course, up to a certain point in a civilized community, a man is helped in carrying out this resolve by the law of the land, which is based on principles of justice. The laws which protect property and punish stealing will enforce to a very large extent, as against

its more flagrant violations, this law of another's rights. But we all feel that Justice, as a virtue, reaches much further than this into the inner life, that it is a principle which does much more than keep us free from a collision with the laws which safeguard property, that it affects our inmost relations with our neighbour—nay, that it has something to do with our attitude towards God Almighty Himself.

## I.

The rights of others—it is not such an easy thing, after all, to remember always that others have rights. Look at the greedy child! what an unpleasant object he is; snatching and seizing here and there, regardless of the cries or disappointment of others too weak to resist him. Look at the selfish man! He is only the greedy child enlarged, with the crudities and absurdities knocked off by the ways of the world, justified by such maxims of prudence as make it easier for him to get his own way. See him pushing and elbowing his path, with only one great ideal before him, how most to amplify his little stock of good things, and to divert to his own

use the advantages, the prosperity, and happiness of all who come across his path!

The rights of man—let us look at some of them which are safe-guarded by Justice.

1. First of all, a man has a simple, a most elementary right to his own property. It is a mistake to suppose that the laws which govern and repress dishonesty are sufficient to ensure this elementary right as against those who disregard it.

Here is a man who fancies that he should like to become the owner of something which he sees in a shop; perhaps he is moved by some passing whim, perhaps he wishes to make money out of it, perhaps, poor creature, he is driven to desperation by the pangs of hunger. He watches his opportunity, he appropriates the property, and finds himself convicted as a thief in the strong clutches of outraged law. But here is a man, well dressed, and well supplied with the necessaries of life, moved by no unbearable pangs of hunger, who passes the same shop, is moved with the same desire of acquiring, and he, instead of stealing the article, goes in and buys it, but does not pay for it, knowing that he cannot pay for it then, and, perhaps, will have some difficulty in paying for it at all. In the sight of God he virtually has stolen those goods, although no magistrate condemns



him, and no penalty follows on his actions. My brethren, in view of the great virtue of Justice, have you considered the great question of the morality of running into debt? There are many and pressing needs waiting to be met, the poor, the fatherless, the widow, the outcast, the sick—they get none of your money. You cannot afford it. Why? Because it is wasted on that monster, self. Still you must have more and still more; you are afraid to steal, and therefore you run into debt that you may satiate this craving to possess. And people who can ill afford it are deprived of their means of livelihood while you hold what is really their property. They wait for your convenience, still they wait, and at last perhaps they see him who holds their property sail off a dishonest bankrupt, who pays the miserable pittance which is extracted from him, having thieved the rest. Ah, my brethren, it is a sad cry which we hear in our streets day by day, the petty record of some trumpery race; because for every one of those races young men here, and young men there, have been guilty of the thieving of betting, for so it is; either thereby they rob another of his money, which he has no right to waste on such follies, however willingly he does it, or rob away their own or their parents' money from the solid and serious issues of

life, to squander it on one of the most degrading passions which can take possession of a man's heart. And thieving begets thieving. There comes a time when this man thinks he can be honourable by doing a dishonourable action. Like the dishonest customer, he borrows without leave, intending to pay, and one more coil of perdition is wound round his unhappy life.

Man has a right to his own property, and anything which, however remotely, interferes with that right, whether we steal, or whether we buy without payment or borrow without leave, or misapply from its proper purpose, is a blow struck at justice.

2. And if man has a right to his property, much more has he a right to his life.

It is strange how long the system of slavery lingered on with its systematic disregard of the most elementary rights of man. Not content with seizing what a man possessed, men seized also his powers of acquiring possessions, his productive energies and resources, so that another might enjoy a manifold share in this world far wider than he could otherwise have attained to. The slave as the living machine, without rights and without recognition, remains as one of the most gigantic monuments of the perversion of the idea of justice in the minds of

those who, on the whole, loved justice and conceived themselves to be just.

And we must remember, dear brethren, that slavery still exists even in the most free countries.

There are those who are enslaved by the advancing tide of luxury, which demands more and more ministers to its selfish enjoyment. Men and women crowded together without decent accommodation, forced to live close to those to whose luxuries they minister, men and women who toil day and night to make luxuries cheaper and ever cheaper, for those who insist on having more and more of them, and paying less and less for their enjoyments, who are dressed in finery which represents the lives of men, and eat and drink the good things which have been purchased from barely remunerated labour. There is the slavery, again, which lives on the sin and degradation of others, one of the most appalling spectacles of modern civilisation,—men who profess to believe in Christ, or who at least live in a Christian land, openly despising and degrading souls for whom Christ died. There is nothing to compare in awful malignity to the sin of those who think to make life more full of guilty intoxication by compassing the ruin of another's soul. No more fearful denunciation runs through the

pages of the Bible than this:—"Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come: but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones." O awful cry ringing through the realms of hell—"I should not have come here but for thee." To deprive another of his soul's life through sin is to insult the love of God, it is to outrage the majesty of His Divine Justice.

3. If a man has a right to his life, he has also a right to that which makes for happiness in life. How very little we think in our ordinary conversation of the value to our neighbour of his reputation, his character, or his position. The smallest caprice is looked upon as sufficient to justify the sarcastic cut, the cynical stab, the damaging suggestion which demolishes, to our satisfaction, our neighbour's too exuberant life.

"Do to all men as ye would that men should do unto you" is a precept of Justice which we need to remember constantly in conversation and behaviour; a mere passing unreasonable dislike, an unworthy suspicion, or a base jealousy, are not reasons which can ever justify a man in depriving another of

that which is his due in courtesy and respect. Gossip, scandal, whispering are not condoned in the sight of the Eternal Justice, because they are witty and brighten conversation, because they are startling and help to sell a newspaper or because they are damaging and help to render more obnoxious an unpopular cause. In times of religious and political controversy it is doubly necessary to remember that the great cause of truth can never be served by depriving your adversary of that which is his due in fairness and sincerity. It is not a little disquieting to see how very little religious controversy has succeeded in purifying its methods all through the long years of miserable strife which has disgraced Christianity and belied the principles of those who call themselves Christians. Three centuries ago a man burned his adversary to death, if so be that he could bring it about, deprived him, that is, of his right to live. All this long lapse of time has not availed to teach us that a man has a right to his reputation, which is to him as his life, even if we disagree with his opinions, or believe him to be mistaken. One of the saddest things to see at the present day is the attempt, in the miserable exigencies of partisan strife, to blacken the name and tarnish the fame of those who have been honoured and respected

in their lives as good and sincere men. It is possible to inflict pain and wounds by so doing, but the price is a heavy one. The world is so much the poorer for every good man who is proved to be insincere; it is the baser for every high name which is dragged down from its honourable pedestal, and the cause of progress and of truth is damaged by another so-called proof of flagrant hypocrisy. It is as when a merciless general in the bitterness of warfare sets himself to punish a town by burning down its library, its hospital, its cathedral; it is brutal warfare at the best, and it leaves the world with a black scar upon some of its most cherished possessions. The enemy is humbled, but the real sufferer is humanity. My brethren, we do not need to poison wells, nor war with the dead, nor seek to damage honoured names, in order to win the victory of orthodoxy. Give every man his due, even those who seem to be most opposed to you; you will stand side by side at the judgment bar, side by side you will plead for His infinite pity, and claim the merits of His great sacrifice. We want justice in the daily dealings of our life, justice in all the relations which link us to our neighbour, justice in those matters where, without knowing it, we may be tempted to be unfair.

And there is everything to hope from the fact that the Bishop of this diocese has summoned certain representative men in the religious world to meet together in conference in the autumn, to see whether something cannot be done to restore mutual respect, to purify controversy, to abate religious bitterness, and disperse party prejudice. "Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?"

## II.

But if Justice is the virtue which bids us do that which right requires in our dealings with our fellow-men, Christianity, in the higher light which she has thrown upon these virtues, has felt that even more Justice is the virtue which bids us do what is right in our dealings with God. Every Christian, who thinks at all, feels that God has a right to the service and obedience of His creatures. We have been taught in our Catechism to believe in God Who made us and all the world, in God Who redeemed us and all mankind, and in God Who sanctifies us and all the elect people of God. He Who made me has rights over me. He Who bought me with His precious Blood has rights over me. He to Whom I owe it that I can think, speak, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight, has a right to my service.

1. My brethren, one of the many serious signs of the times is the apparent want of the sense of responsibility which exists in so many quarters. Souls wake up to find themselves in the possession of the gift of life. They see all around them a crowd pushing one way, struggling for existence, for posts of honour, striving to eat, drink, and be merry. They are sent to school; round the doors they hear the hoarse cries of those demanding that they shall not be taught this about God or that about religion—"no religion at all rather than give an advantage to the Established Church." "No religion at all unless shibboleth is pronounced with absolutely faultless accent according to the prevailing twang of that controversy which happens to be in vogue." The poor child knows nothing about God, and no one seems to care about religion, except to quarrel as to its terms. He enters within the walls sacred to the cause of education; he is taught to get on—to push and cram and struggle—until he is able to take his place in the throng outside; and then once more he pushes and is pushed; he is robbed, trampled on; he sits down; he gives up the struggle; it may be with his own hand he cuts off that life which no one ever taught him how to cherish. He came into the world without being consulted, and he dies undesired.



My brethren, Justice demands that we should cultivate a sense of responsibility. Have you heard the voice of God calling you into the place which you occupy in life? Do you feel that you are here in obedience to a call? That you have a work to do which only you can do, and for which you are kept alive until it is done. Vocation, not ambition, is the true key to life.

There are certain professions the entrance to which is generally recognised to be through vocation, that is to say, a call from God. Such is pre-eminently the ministry of the Church known as Holy Orders. This call may come in various ways, it may come suddenly in some divine impulse, it may come gradually in the shapening of circumstances all tending that way, in the wish of friends, the disposition of tastes, the sudden arrest of interest by a story of heroism in the mission field, a sense of the needs of the Church or a desire to do good. It is possible that I may be speaking to some young men to-day who have heard God's voice, as Samuel heard it in the still night, and scarcely know what it means. To them God is calling and speaking, and asks for a recognition of His claims to their love and service.

My brethren, it is a sad illustration of what I have been saying, that in the profession

which is pre-eminently entered into in a sense of Divine responsibility and Divine call, fewer and fewer seem to be responding to it. Look at our public schools. Three or four at the most are leaving one of the greatest of them with this profession in view. Look at our universities, fewer and fewer are shaping their training in this way. It is not the poverty of the profession, it is not the wretched party strife, and the sordid nature of the conflict waged against the Church. The cause is deeper, the sense of responsibility is weakened in men's hearts. After all, Holy Orders is not the only profession the entrance to which is through vocation. Life itself is, or should be, as I have said, carried out in obedience to vocation. My brethren, are you giving God His due in this respect? Are you doing anything like what you ought for the Great Being Who sent you into this world, not to eat and drink and be crammed with useful knowledge, and then push and struggle again, and perhaps die exultant because you had beaten a companion in the competitive examinations of life, and stood one step higher on its dizzy ladder. The idea is wrong in itself, it is not the profession but the vocation which we have to consider. If we have got God's call, and recognise our duty to Him, then it matters not where we work.

The servant of God will glorify a cabin, a man who forgets God will degrade a palace.

Cease, dear brethren, the mere struggle to get on, and put God first. Am I glorifying God by my actions in honest, serious life, lived as in His sight? Is this world the better because I am alive? Is society purer because I move in it? Is the place of business more worthy because I am there? Justice within my heart assigns the first place in life to God Who made it.

2. If God has a right to my ambition, He has a right to my activity. Here again is a sight even sadder than the former—viz., the number of those who sit idly looking on as the pushing, anxious stream grinds its way past them. There they sit, men and women, who seem to have lost energy for everything and to have missed their place in life. “My Father worketh hitherto and I work.” To be idle is to fail in one of those marks of resemblance which ought to distinguish man made in the image and likeness of God as the son of His Heavenly Father.

Think of the idleness that there is in this huge city! Think of the hundreds of lives which wake up morning after morning to do nothing, to lounge in the parks or streets, to read novels and go to the theatre! Think of the splendid opportunities that are being

thrown away, because men who can work will not do it, and wear away their capacities and their opportunities in the lotus-eating of so-called pleasure; while all the time there are many who long for work and cannot get it, and pine away broken-hearted in the strange and mysterious allotment of life, which gives opportunities to those who refuse to use them, and seems to deny them to those who will. Idleness is not only to dissipate our own powers or rob our employers, it is to cheat God of His due. God has a right to ask, when He gives us work to do, that we should do it with our might. There are evils which come with idleness which mark out clearly the bad nature of a cessation from work in this busy world of God's creation, weeds which gather on the stagnant pool, blight and mildew which fasten on the plant shut up and untended.

“The Devil tempts man,” says the old proverb, “an idle man tempts the Devil.” Nothing really can lie idle in a world like this; if it is not being used for God, it is being used for His enemies. “I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and

considered it well; I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep; so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man." <sup>1</sup> To all, whether early in the morning or at midday, or even at the eleventh hour, the voice of God speaks to our slumbering sense of Justice, and says: "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" "Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right that shall ye receive."

3. But God has a right also to our homage and worship. This we offer to no one else; but Justice demands that we should offer it to Him. Do we realise that God has a right to our prayers and praises and our worship? It is not a question of our inclination, but of God's due, whether or not we say our prayers. It is not a matter of our own whims and fancy, but of God's honour, whether or not we "come before His Presence with thanksgiving, and show ourselves glad in Him with psalms." Clergy are in the habit of speaking of the Divine service which they offer to God, as their duty; to pay God due and proper worship is the duty of the layman as well. Are we in any danger of losing our sense of duty in this respect? In old days, not so far removed from the present, parents used to

say to their children, when Sunday came round, 'My children, it is the Lord's Day; it is our duty to go to church,' and whatever might be the weather, whatever might be the inclination of the child, to church he went, without being asked whether he wished to go or not, simply because it was the duty of all to go. Now too often either the child is sent off to a Sunday school to be out of the way at home, and be taken to church as one of a herd, or sent with teacher or governess as a task, or even he is consulted as to whether it is his inclination to go or not, and the child longs for the time when he can exercise the more untrammelled right of his elders to stay at home unquestioned and unrebuked. He grows up to think that religious duties must depend largely on the individual tastes and inclinations; that on some days a journey into the country will be more elevating to his feelings, or attendance at a concert, or complete rest at home, or the study of poetry, or, perhaps, the reading of a sermon.

Church-going, regulated by inclination, is the natural outcome of a religious life, which has ceased to govern itself by duty, and to cause inclination to submit itself to a sense of what is right and fitting. This state of mind sooner or later takes the almost inevitable step of regulating attendance at Divine

worship, by the pleasure or satisfaction to be gained by it. 'I do not seem to gain good by going' is accepted as quite a sufficient reason for staying away. A dislike to the messenger who holds in his hands the Bread of Life is quite a sufficient reason for depriving the soul of the food which he offers. The sermon, the singing, the ritual, the doctrine, the reading—it would be hard not to be able to find some excellent excuse for absenting himself from that which was merely designed to elevate the individual, to quicken his aspirations, and purify his religious tastes. How quickly we can lose sight altogether of God's due in the matter! How easy it is to forget that we do not come to church mainly to *get*, but to *give*: "O come let us worship and fall down and kneel before the Lord our Maker"—that God comes first and that we come afterwards. It would be something if we determined to do what we could to put a stop to this robbing the Lord of His rights to the worship of His creatures now so prevalent. God, who gave you all your life, has a right to a portion of your time as well as a portion of your hearts. He has a right to one day in seven, which He claims as His due. He has a right to at least a small portion of your time every day in the morning and in the evening. It is the very least we can give as a recogni-

tion of Him who gives us all, and who never yet received the gifts of His creatures without returning to them a bountiful interest in that which enriches life and happiness.

My brethren, we are accustomed to hear from some of our Continental neighbours a great deal about glory. Glory is one of those crowns of merit which are apt to flag and wither when the first flush of renown has passed away. There is a deeper and more lasting motive than the desire for glory, and that is the sense of duty. "It does not matter who saved Ladysmith," it was said, "as long as Ladysmith was saved." Duty—the determination to do a thing because it is right, is the outcome of this great virtue Justice, which sets itself to give to every one that which is their due. Justice is one of the attributes of God Himself which we cherish and revere. We know that neither love for our human nature, nor compassion for our weakness, nor anger for our manifold trespasses, will ever move Him from the justice tempered with mercy wherewith He governs the world. This has been our stay in all the alternations of hope and fear which have moved us as to the fate of our friends in China. We still wait to know the full extent of God's merciful deliverance, but we wait in confident trust in God's justice. God reigns.



“The Lord is King, be the people never so impatient. He sitteth between the cherubims, be the earth never so unquiet.” And we, too, in our measure, can put no higher standard of action before ourselves than this, which our old Church Catechism has held up before generations of her children:—“To be true and just in all my dealing: to bear no malice nor hatred in my heart: to keep my hands from picking and stealing, and my tongue from evil speaking, lying, and slandering, . . . not to covet nor desire other men’s goods; but to learn and labour truly to get mine own living, and to do my duty in that state of life, unto which it shall please God to call me.”



IV

**FORTITUDE**



## IV

### FORTITUDE

A SERMON PREACHED IN S. PAUL'S  
CATHEDRAL IN AUGUST, 1900.

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear: the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid?”—PSA. xxvii. 1.

WE have seen only lately in this city, in a spot not far from this cathedral, a cloister set aside to commemorate deeds of heroism and self-sacrifice, that the names of those who have enriched the world by beautiful examples of courage and devotion should not die.

In our army there is no decoration more coveted than the little bronze cross, with its inscription “For Valour,” which signalises the possessor as one who displayed bravery in the face of great danger. There is no virtue so popular, so sure of generous applause, as that of fortitude displayed in acts of courage, or in quiet uncomplaining endurance; there is no

one so despised, on the other hand, as the coward who shrinks from duty in craven fear, and betrays the succours which reason offers. And yet we are apt to look upon this as a virtue which belongs to a few, to those who have been brought face to face with a supreme crisis, and have gallantly met it, rather than as one of the cardinal virtues which are necessary always and for everybody, without which we cannot step forward in life, or reach that position which God designed us to fulfil.

## I.

As Temperance teaches a man how not to touch, as Prudence teaches him what to do and what to avoid, as Justice teaches him what to allow to others, so Fortitude stands before him to correct the shrinking from hard things, the fear of opposition, the pain of endurance, ever telling him that "no man is crowned except he strive lawfully," and that "he that shall endure unto the end the same shall be saved."

Let us pause at the outset to correct some of our ideas of Fortitude. Here is no virtue which belongs only to those who trade in dangerous callings, such as the soldier and

the sailor, this is not merely a virtue of the battlefield, but a virtue which finds ample field for development in the simplest life. We stop to admire the soldier who goes back under fire to rescue a wounded comrade, placing him on his back, bearing him safely, amidst a storm of bullets, away to the ambulance waggon and safety. But *his* courage is no less who, with scant means and feeble health, struggles day by day against the assaults of poverty and weariness, setting aside self-indulgence, or any thought lower than that of affection and duty, that out of his scanty earnings he may support his aged parents, and keep together the little home which depends on his resolute self-sacrifice. Horatio keeping the bridge over the Tiber against the onrush of the enemy is a noble sight : one man confident in his honour, cheered by all the traditions of his country, and proud in the sense of joyous strength. But equally brave, equally noble, is he, that unknown, despised servant of God, who stands out, one against a host of evil, who sticks up for a purer tradition, and fights alone the battle of truth and honour, with overwhelming odds against him, supported only by a great tradition, and by a sense of God's ever-present help : the moral hero who stands in the breach against the invading onslaught of sin.

We honour with the homage of a grateful admiration the guide who takes his life in his hands and climbs up the giddy precipice, where the wind grapples with him, and the snow blinds him, and the slippery rock baffles his upward way, in order to rescue the strangers who have lost their way in the mountain storm. But he is no less deserving of our highest admiration, his courage beats no less high, his endurance is no less noble, who climbs on through storms of obloquy and failure, now stumbling, now falling, in order to hold out the rescuing hand to some young life, which is likely to lose its way, in the storms of vice which sweep over a great city, and fall the victim to evil fashion, and perish in the engulfing torrents of vice. The heroism of daily life is just as real as the heroism which shines so brilliantly in fields of sudden stress and adventure. There are many on whose breast the Recording Angel pins the decoration "For Valour," whose names are never known, and whose deeds have met with no chronicler.

But more than this, as I would venture to put before you to-day, Fortitude (courage) is a virtue for all, necessary always and everywhere, in a world such as this, amidst dangers and assaults which beset every, even the most sheltered life, and even minister



to its perfection. And let us dismiss at once the idea that courage has to do with high spirits and bodily strength, that to be courageous means to have no sense of danger, and to be a stranger to fear. In many cases it is just the opposite. There are some people who are naturally high-spirited, who are devoid of imagination and any sense of apprehension. Danger does not appeal to them, they go to meet it without any sense of heroism or flutter of alarm. They may be envied for the possession of a natural endowment, but they do not, therefore, stand forth as the highest examples of bravery. There are others again who go unmoved to meet the most extreme perils, simply because they are ignorant of the true nature of the danger, as a man who should take up a live shell and plunge it over the parapet, not knowing that it was at the point of exploding. He again would not represent the highest type of bravery. But, on the other hand, the man who is delicate, even weak, apprehensive, nervous, keenly sensitive of danger, and accurately acquainted with the full extent of the peril before him, who, with fear in his heart, yet goes manfully forward and carries out with a resolute sense of duty, and with a stern repression of self, that line of conduct which has been pointed out to him—to him

we assign the meed of the highest bravery. He knew his danger, and he felt it, but, strong in the sense of duty, he went forward in the true spirit of fortitude. So that no one need flatter himself that he is exempt by constitutional defects or lack of opportunity from the exercise of this great virtue. Nay more, to fail in it, to lose heart, to lose courage, to shrink from the battle, to give up endurance, to step out of rank, is to fall down and die in the conflict of life. The crown of life is worth a struggle, and cannot be won without it. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne." <sup>1</sup>

## II.

If a man starting out on the journey of life has to practice rigorous self-control in view of all that meets him in his path; if he has to scan long and anxiously the many and various intersecting roads: if he has to pause and make way, now here, now there, for his fellow travellers; so he cannot go far without finding his powers of endurance put to the severest test, under the stress of constant and

<sup>1</sup> Rev. iii. 21.

ever menacing trials which are sprung upon him from the most unexpected quarters. One might have supposed that the carefully nurtured child, the well-disposed boy, the man with a purpose and an aim in life, conscious of integrity, firm in principle, might be allowed to go forward unmolested. It is not so. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life." "My son, if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul for temptation," or trial. Fortitude (courage) is necessary at every stage to keep a man up amidst the strange unlooked-for trials which beset his path.

1. First of all, he cannot go far without finding that the service of God is one which will try him to the very depths of his heart. God has in His good providence designed for us a certain character which He wills to work out in us. It dawns upon us that God can elevate and adorn the wayward temperament, the constituent parts of our life; that He wills us to be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures. We see the wonderful possibilities of the body, its strength, its vigour, its manhood, and we snatch it away from the degradation of life around us and offer it to God. We see the wondrous possibilities of mind, all the beauties of intellectual power, the glories of imaginative art, the almost unlimited

capabilities of reason, and we snatch away our inner life from the degrading frivolities of the world and offer it up to God. While there opens up to us through the spirit fresh regions of beauty and love, God offers to dwell in us, and we in Him, and we seek to know Him more and more and His power.

We see what we might be, and we press forward towards its realisation. And then there comes the call of God, in what we call vocation. We are called to this profession or to that, some to minister in His Church, as the stewards of His Mysteries; some to minister to the needs of men in the beneficent and noble profession of medicine; some to other learned professions, now here and now there; some are called to be the defenders of their country, and to maintain its honour, and the great principles of national and international justice, to be the executors of God's wrath, the instrument of His discipline, and to maintain the right; others are called in this department of business and in that to make just this or that part of the world better, more productive, more worthy of the Author of all good and perfection. And then, when the call has been recognised, God has chosen the circumstances. He has placed us here, He has placed us there. He has given us this or that measure of success, He has

given us these or those friends. And here, when we have taken God as our friend, recognised His power, obeyed His call, accepted His disposition of life for us, what more do we need? "I have set God always before me." "The Lord is on my side, I will not be afraid what man can do unto me"—where is the need for fortitude in the life hedged round by God? My brethren, we know, and we know it well, that it is just on those lives which God has accepted that there fall the smart blows of discipline. And on our fortitude, on our endurance, depends the full perfection of life and character which God designs us to have. Here is Abraham, he has walked with God, shaping his footsteps according to His loving direction. He has left home and kindred in obedience to the Divine call. God has given him a son, an unexpected treasure on whom centres all the fulness of the endowment of blessing which He had promised. And, suddenly, there comes the voice, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."<sup>1</sup> Here is Joseph, from a child giving himself up to God, the receiver of His revelation, the bearer of His messages,

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xxii. 2.

firm in his integrity and pure in life. Yet he finds himself in the pit, he finds himself banished, he finds his prosperity taken away from him; in prison and neglect God has apparently left him. Look at the Forerunner, the Great S. John the Baptist, dying alone, slain by a woman's caprice, as if all his strong witness, his wonderful life, had passed for nothing. Did not Abraham need courage? Did not Joseph need courage? Did not S. John the Baptist need courage?—courage in the hands of God? And we shall need it too. Ask many a young man to-day who has fought his way to Holy Orders—has he found it easy? Did not God know the earnestness of his heart, the sincerity of his endeavour? Why then these obstacles? obstacles at home from friends who tried to stop him, obstacles from scanty means, so that at one time it seemed impossible to get the necessary education, the temptation to weariness and despair? The call of God,—why does it lead us over such broken paths? Look at that life desolated with sorrow and bereavement, health, friends, money, all gone. Is God angry? Is God taking vengeance? Has He not accepted the earnest offer of a heart's devotion? Again and again we need courage, if we would take the highest line. The crooked temper has to be brought into proper order, the disabling

vices to be eradicated, the rebellious self-will to be brought into harmony with God's Will. Those great gifts and virtues which He designs for us do not spring up naturally in the heart, they have to be beaten out by the blows of adversity, and shaped by the keen edge of discipline. Courage is needed daily to answer to God's call, courage to draw out the fulness of blessing which He designs for us, knowing that whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.

2. But apart from God's discipline, with its healing smart and bracing correction, the child of God soon becomes conscious that the way of uprightness and integrity is only to be pursued in the face of a fierce opposition from a hostile world. We look back over the glorious record of Christian heroism, and we see how again and again the servant of God was pursued, hunted, and trampled down, not for any tangible offence, but on the grounds suggested by an insane prejudice and cruel misrepresentation. We sing day by day, little realising what we say, "The noble army of martyrs, praise Thee." We seldom stop to consider the strange anomaly that the world should have hastened to extirpate with every sort of cruelty those whose only offence it was that they were living lives of purity, devotion, and beneficence.

The days of martyrdom are not passed, we have seen devoted missionaries, and natives still young in their Christian profession, tortured and put to death in China for their faith, and the supposed evils with which fanatical prejudice surrounds it. It is a stern awakening to an age like this, which thinks so little as to the value of this or that profession of faith, and poses as the enlightened upholder of all convictions, while believing sincerely in none—to see a profession of faith once more made a matter of life and death. Don't let us be taken in, dear brethren, by expressions of liberal tolerance at home; there are no bigots so fierce, none, in many cases, so cruelly intolerant, as those who profess to disbelieve in the importance of any definite system of faith, and who mock at dogmatic precision. Most certainly he who will follow Jesus Christ wherever he lives, and however humble be his position, will have to reckon with a world largely and strangely hostile, with a tolerance which stops short of the faith which he believes, and the life which he is called upon to live in virtue of his Christian calling. A man of principle, *i.e.*, a man who consistently follows what is right because it is right will need more and more the cardinal virtue of Fortitude. It is an occasion, perhaps, when some question of morality is being hotly



argued. "This has been denounced as wrong but I see no harm in it," says some fierce disputant, "but what sayest thou? On what authority doest thou these things, and who gave thee this authority?" Suddenly perhaps the most sacred truths of religion, the doctrine of the Sacraments, the inspiration of the Bible, old and cherished beliefs are tossed wildly into the seething whirlpool of controversy. "Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not?" Questions of the day, furiously and hotly contested, have to be answered, when it seems impossible to avoid offending either this one or that. "Surely thou art one of this man's disciples?" The challenge comes when it is just most inconvenient, when the consequences of the avowal seem to be most perilous. What a temptation it is to hide the unpopular belief, to shrink away from the side of those who are being persecuted for righteousness' sake, and buy a momentary and disgraceful peace at the price of cowardice, and to carry away the almost unsupportable burden of a dishonoured conscience. My brethren, we need not go back to the ages of the persecutions to look for martyrs. We need not leave our shores and seek the glorious fields of missionary service to win that precious prize, and make that noble profession. Martyrdom, in the

sense of witness to unpopular truths, is the lot of every one who is trying to live close to God. We cannot hope to escape it, or to pass through life unnoticed. Every good life is a protest to the evil around, which challenges notice. Every true Christian man of principle is bound to be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh him a reason of the hope that is in him with meekness and fear. And it is astonishing how great a demand this makes on a man's courage. Many a man would rather meet an armed foe and court death in the assault than he would stand up and proclaim himself a Christian in the face of mockery and opposition. Many find it harder to say the little word "No" to an evil suggestion than they would to face some overwhelming danger. Moral courage is needed day by day if we would carry our principles untarnished through the world. Few of us would be able to carry out without shrinking that brave determination which animated our great statesman of whom we are told that he rose from the dinner-table and ordered his carriage when the conversation took a turn which was dishonourable to the Christian profession and became an insult to His Divine Master.

3. And Fortitude no less is a virtue which we require in dealing with our own inherent

weakness. It takes a man a long time to discover how essentially weak he is, and how utterly unable to do anything that is good, or overcome anything that is evil, without the grace of God.

How many people are being paralysed with what they call their temperament or their besetting sin! How many have ceased even to try to overcome these things which seem to overmaster their nature! Here Fortitude comes to our aid and bids us refuse to recognise the word "impossible" as being in the Christian vocabulary. God made us, God knows whereof we are made. God is Almighty. God will never suffer us to be tempted above that we are able. God, by His grace, will enable us to overcome sins and faults which seem to be most deeply engrained in our nature. Many a man is being lured into sin by the enticement of temptation. Many are drifting into sin from very weakness, but many also are being frightened into sin from a sense of their own powerlessness to resist. It is here that courage comes to our aid. 'Strong Son of God,' we pray, 'give us of Thy strength.' The reproach of the ancient world has been done away in Christ. Now we may not only know what is right, but by His grace and strength we are enabled to do it. To have failed again and

again is no reason why we should not ultimately conquer. That which we now call our weak point will, by God's grace, be our strong point. Courage, with all its noble strength, will rise up within us, and refuse to acquiesce in slavery, in a degraded will, in overmastering desires, temptation feebly resisted, and returning with overwhelming force. Again and again we read in the Bible this exhortation "Be strong." Ghostly strength is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit which was poured upon us at our baptism. And one of the great secrets of overcoming evil is to be brave and never to despair.

Ah! my brethren, if ever we have admired the virtue of courage in some of its noble and conspicuous manifestations; if our hearts have been stirred within us at the heroes of the battle-field or the hospital, let us not cease our efforts until we have made it alive within ourselves. "For valour"—let that be our coveted decoration at the hands of our Sovereign Lord. Yes, that hard life so full of trouble, so beset with difficulty, with its heartrending-sorrows and desolating anguish, needs a brave heart to support it and to draw from it the discipline and the blessing with which God has charged it. Courage is the virtue we need, as we press forward clasping our treasure to our heart, as the

world surges and tosses round us, in its fury and hatred seeking to rob us of our peace and joy and crown of blessing. Courage is what we need to fight the great battle against evil within, a courage which refuses to yield, and knows no despair. Here is a virtue which no one can afford to neglect, here is a virtue which extracts admiration even from our foes.

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear: the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid?”



V

THE NEW CENTURY





## V

### THE NEW CENTURY

PREACHED AT S. PAUL'S IN DECEMBER, 1900.

“But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail.”—  
PSA. cii. 27.

WE stand to-night, dear brethren, at the very edge of a new century. True, day and night will go on as before, as far as we know, on Tuesday next; there will be no change stamped visibly on the face of the world. The curtain will not fall, and a new scene usher in a new act, before which we shall play our little part on the stage. Business will be the same, pleasure will be the same, the great stream of life will pour along without even a shadow of a passing cloud on its surface.

A change of century is after all only a sentiment, an appeal to the imagination. A century is at the most a carefully ruled page with its spaces, and divisions, and headings under which we put down the precious figures

of time as it pours itself out in its golden flood. We are turning over another page, that is all; but there is something to be carried on as a remainder from those items of days and years, to be added to the greater column of history. A life without imagination is, after all, a maimed life, a life without poetry, music, or other art. God has ever hung the walls of our life with pictures to cheer us and instruct us, such as we find in the course of Nature, the yearly cycle of religious commemorations, or the anniversaries of history. And one picture is finished to-day on the walls of our life, and another is waiting to be sketched in, while God says to those who pass by, "Interrogate the past, occupy the present, trust the future," for, after all, "single days are single lives. There is no difference between a day and an age."

## I.

It is a solemn thing to enter on a period of which, in all human probability, no single person here will live to see the end. Xerxes wept as he sat on his marble throne and saw gathered before him the vast host which he had mustered for his colossal enterprise; he

wept as he looked down on his battalions and galleys, in which the whole Eastern world seemed astir, moving to engulf the West, because, he said, in a hundred years' time all would be gone. And who of all gathered here can hope to see another day like this? The old century totters forward, leaning on the future, an old man leaning on a youth. He whispers in his ear his successes; he passes on from his trembling fingers the blazing torch, while youth shouts back his confident schemes impatient to be gone, exulting in his strength and flushed already with anticipated victory. "Things will not be as they have been," mourns the old century. "The world's great age begins anew, the golden years return," shouts the new. At least, we will thank imagination for giving us a pause, a time to look around us, a moment to think, just such a time as when we take down the sheet which has covered the work, and look and compare, and note: this is finished, this remains to be done; this must come away. The end of a century—it is a resting-place in life's stage; we will thank imagination for that. We have been sailing along life's stream, now touching here, now touching there; and to-day for a moment we disembark and look around us, before we enter on a new stage;

our friends and travelling companions are all around us. There are some who have been carried along, and have never once taken their eyes off their business: nor art, nor nature, nor history, nor religion has appealed to them; as the man of business has been conveyed, like a bale of goods, from one point to another. There are others who only remember places by the food which they ate, who have passed through scenes of historic interest, or have been face to face with nature in all its magnificence, who have passed through scenes which prophets and kings have desired to see, and died without seeing—still they only remember the dinner, or the fruit, or the heat or the cold; men who have lived for appetite. Whereas there are some who have become “a part of all that they have met,” to whom life has been one long course of beauty, its storms and its sunshine, its difficulties and its pleasures all eloquent; and to-day they feel a freshness in the air which blows off the sea, to-day their life heaves and sighs with a deep undercurrent which sets in from eternity: already they can discern the white barrier of foam, and the dark line beyond, where the river and the sea unite over the bar with its mournful moan and gasping cadences; already the sea-birds with out-

stretched wings are flying in towards them, messengers from the future, heralds of the unknown. Imagination can do much to enrich life, but we must sedulously refuse to allow it to sap its vitality. Imagination is no friend if it causes us to sit down on the edge of a century and build castles in the air which perish while we build. Imagination is no friend if it be taken into the service of melancholy and despondency, or if it be allowed to sacrifice work for the sake of feeling.

No doubt there have been watchers standing at the brink of centuries before ours, who, instead of borrowing from the future in hope, have entered the new year weighted with the liabilities of melancholy and despair. In 1801, as the nineteenth century began to dawn, there must have been many who looked out anxiously at the dark clouds of war. It was the year of Nelson's victory at Copenhagen; it was a year when one of the threatened invasions of England by our neighbours seemed more than usually imminent. Doubtless there were some who sat down in despair, while imagination drew a figure in fire and smoke and blood of a devastated England, and the coming of a military Antichrist.

When the eighteenth century dawned, in

1701, there was no direct successor to the throne of England, after the death of William III. and Anne. James II. died this year in exile, with all the complications that followed on his death, and William III. himself was within one year of his own death. No doubt many must have sat down with imagination then, and mourned over the unsettled times, and have conjured up visions clouded by the worst precedents out of our stormy history.

When the seventeenth century dawned, in 1601, a glorious reign was coming to an end, glorious in spite of fears and trouble. And the domestic strife which centred round Lord Essex was disturbing the last years of Elizabeth, who was within two years of her death. Here, again, there must have been many who said, What will come after? Is there stability and vitality enough to survive the shock of change? Imagination must have had some gloomy as well as hopeful pages to paint at the opening of that new volume of history. And so in 1501, at the beginning of the sixteenth century. This was the year when Catharine of Arragon appeared in England as the bride of Prince Arthur, whose marriage with Henry VIII. afterwards was the apparently slight instrumental cause of such tremendous convulsions.

Here imagination must have been at fault, or, at least, barely cognisant of the changes which loomed indistinguishable before it in the thick clouds which veil the Providence of God.

Think what it must have meant at different periods throughout these four centuries, to be a Churchman keenly alive to the progress of religion and the interests of the spread of Christian morality and sound doctrine! Think how again and again the cause of religion must have seemed to be desperate. Think, in 1501, of the clouds which were gathering, the losing of all confidence in leaders, the wild upheaval of passion and rapine which traded on the genuine desire for reformation, and left behind them such a legacy of complication, in the nemesis which always follows on those who do what is right in a wrong way. Think in the next century of the storm which burst over the Church in this land, when the strong hand of Elizabeth was removed, culminating in the overthrow of both Altar and Throne. This has been given as a fair estimate of the state of religion in the beginning of the eighteenth century. "Throughout Society men looked upon office, not from the point of view of the duties to be performed, but from that of the emolument to be gained.

If they were politicians they expected and received in the shape of sinecures and gratifications what they considered to be a reasonable remuneration for their services. If they were ecclesiastics they accepted deaneries and bishoprics and rectories, because by such combinations alone could they obtain a reasonable reward for their efforts. The more this system flourishes the more dead became religion, the more dull the sense of responsibility." In this cathedral, for instance, in the year 1700, there were but six communicants at the only celebration on Easter Day. And at the beginning of the nineteenth century things were much the same, perhaps worse. The sense of corporate worship and of the meaning of a liturgy had almost died out. "Amid the crash of empires and the stress of revolutions, unaffected by the losses of the past or the hopes of the future, indifferent alike to the religious movement within, or political danger without, the Church of England raised her impassive front among the storms which raged round her, sublime in her apathy, unchanged and apparently unchangeable, waiting in patience for the knell of her doom to toll." So might Despair have spoken at any of these moments, quite unconscious of the shoots of life which were slowly developing beneath



the unpromising surface, the more vigorous for each storm, the stronger for each repression, and the more enduring by virtue of each frost. If we look carefully we shall find in the darkest periods that which the world calls a reaction. "All seems at one moment drifting to confusion. We say it is vain to fight against the current; we think that all has been lost, when, the next, the tide comes back in its strength to save us, and, behold! more than we had lost is recovered." The comparative settlement under Elizabeth succeeds the wild storms under Henry, Edward, and Mary in the sixteenth century. The strong and learned Churchmen of the Restoration are the reaction from the ignorance and profanity of the Great Rebellion in the seventeenth century. The vigorous revival of spiritual life under Wesley in the middle of the eighteenth century is the direct result of the dead Erastianism and lifeless orthodoxy of its opening years. The Oxford Revival in the nineteenth century has wiped away, or tended to do so, the reproach which lay upon its earlier years. But these reactions, as we call them, are not merely like the swaying of a pendulum, first to one side then to the other in the restlessness of human fashion which never continueth in

one stay, they are comparable rather to the incoming tide, each wave as it recedes comes back—it is true, only to recede again—but there is a steady progress all the while; gradually the bay is filling up, with its flood of deep water obliterating the barren sands which before lay bare. Through all the changes there has been one immovable supreme Will, guiding and directing all. Reaction, as we call it, is only the changing of God's right hand now visible now hidden from us. "Thou art the Same" is the expression of our creed as we watch the evolution of His purpose through the tossing waves of centuries as they roll by us, lashed with storm and white with tempest. "The waters thereof rage and swell, and the mountains shake at the tempest of the same." "The Lord sitteth above the water flood. The Lord remaineth a King for ever."

"Say not the struggle naught availeth  
The labour and the wounds are vain,  
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,  
And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;  
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,  
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,  
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,  
Seem here no painful inch to gain,  
Far back through creeks and inlets making,  
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,  
When daylight comes, comes in the light.  
In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly,  
But westward, look! the land is bright."

## II.

"Thou art the Same." "Thou art He," the unchanging One. The conduct of men has varied and will vary, according to the various ways in which they regard these wondrous words.

1. Fatalism has a powerful fascination for many minds as the religion of indolence, even with those who would energetically repudiate it as a formal doctrine. "What must be, must be" is a formula which relieves us from all necessity for exertion. "Christ has died to save me"; there is an end of all need for personal effort. "If the Church is to come to ruin, nothing that I can do will save it"; "if the empire is to go the way of the other great empires of the ancient world, we can only submit, no one individual can stay it"; "if religious education in this country is a defeated cause, it is no use

keeping up a hopeless struggle"; "if society is tottering to decay over the ruins of morality, no one can prevent it." "All these things are in higher hands than ours," says the moral sluggard, and he grounds his arms, packs up his baggage, and leaves his post, only too ready to give up a struggle and settle down in the calm of an inglorious fatalism. But surely we shall be reading all history amiss if this is the only lesson we get out of the contemplation of its records; that do what we will God always has His way. In one sense it is true; true if we believe that whatever we do God will correct our mistakes, and in the end His Will will be done; false if we believe that He wishes to govern the world without the co-operation of man, or at the best leaving them only a fictitious and unreal part, as a grown-up man might please a child by letting him think that he was giving him real assistance in a work beyond his powers, when in reality he can do him no good, or is at best "something between a hindrance and a help." God's Will prevails, but our co-operation in the carrying out of that Will is part of the Divine provision. The end which He decrees is absolute, the means of approaching that end are various, although still in His hand. A conquered kingdom may acquiesce in the

new government thus imposed upon it, and by an earnest co-operation make the best use of the vicissitudes which came upon it. An unwise decision, on the other hand, may refuse to co-operate, prolong a useless struggle, bring untold misery on the land, and in the end be forced to submit to the inevitable. In either case there was no resisting the determination of the higher power, but in the one case the means pursued were those of wise acquiescence and thoughtful co-operation, in the other foolish resistance, with its inevitable result of punishment and disaster. We must act as if everything were being done by us, even while we know that our movements are controlled by a higher power. The indolent and rebellious are bringing on themselves, and on the centuries in which they live, the trouble and confusion which belong to those who resist the Will of God. Every man is bound to contribute to the good of the age in which he lives. He cannot stand on one side and say, "Things will go on without me"; every part is necessary in the great machine of God. Look out, dear brethren, on the serious questions which loom before us in the coming century. Your duties towards them are a great deal more than those of a speculative curiosity. They are the duties of an earnest and

thoughtful co-operation with God. What has God in store for the Church of England in the coming century? We cannot for one moment doubt, as we interrogate the past, that the Church is alive with the rich sap which runs through and through the healthy branches of the one true Vine. But the wilfulness and indolence of man may mar, put back, and pull down much promise of rich fruit in the immediate future. God will save His Church, we know that, but for the century now coming there may be a lopped stump, instead of a fruitful bough, and God may even take away the fruitful branch from its unkindly prop, and train it elsewhere. My brethren, a very great deal depends on the earnestness and faithfulness of Churchmen. Leaves without fruit are a sorry spectacle; beautiful churches, beautiful services without the fruits of religion are a sad perversion of truth. The wild boar of controversy who roots up must be driven away; the wild beasts of careless living which rend its boughs must be chased off. The apathy of Churchmen and the indifference they display are fruitful sources of trouble. As we look out on the Church questions, the education question, the moral question, the social question—on all the difficulties which gather and threaten in

front of us—let us at least cast off indolence, the indolence of fatalism. Let each see what he can do in his own way, and in his own conviction, towards meeting the dangers which seem to loom ahead. It is full of bad omen for the world when the good men stand on one side and leave the vacant posts to mere adventurers. It is no use musing sentimentally over the passing of a century, or musing complacently over the errors of the times in which we live. It is no use saying, “Where are the good old days? We are going through anarchy to atheism, and through atheism to destruction.” The people who sit on the edge of the hill and watch the battle are always mistaking victory for defeat and defeat for victory. Descend into the contest, take up once more your weapons of defence, do your duty to society, pay your tithe of a good life to the living coffers of the Church. Don’t dabble in questions, but contend for causes; don’t shed tears for exploded Utopias, but exercise your citizenship in the present. There is your post, there in the thick of the fray, there in the quiet corner, there on the lonely plain, there in the fire and heat of danger, there you must stay until your relief comes. It will be a sad thing at the winding up of the ages, when century has followed century

until the cord of destiny has been firmly fixed, sure and steadfast, in God, if it be found that you, who were stored and armed by God with education, with opportunities which fitted you for the post, as the one man designed by Him to fill it, at the last and dreadful day before men and angels, must be for ever proclaimed as a slothful and wicked servant, who more than any one else was false to a great trust, and hopelessly betrayed a great opportunity.

2. But in contradistinction to the fatalism of indolence we shall also find, looking out on the century, the insolence of self-sufficiency. Fatalism folded its arms and became an inert puppet, without a will and without an effort, while in pretended piety it could not presume to interfere with God. Self-sufficiency, on the other hand, is extremely active; it deals with every department of human action, and it does not need God at any point, it can do without Him. It takes what remains of the Old Testament, after it has been stretched and contracted by Procrustean methods to the precise standard of criticism which happens to be in fashion; it shows us what God ought to have said, and what He did say and did not say, and turns away in disgust from the childish prattle of an infant world. It takes the New Testament



and inverts its purpose: the Sermon on the Mount is the Gospel, not the Atonement; the poetry of a Galilean idyll, not the stern proclamation of a warfare with sin, and the means of salvation. Flushed with victory, confident of success, Self-conceit turns its back on a poverty-stricken past, and gazes out into an ideal future, out of which superstition has vanished, and humanity, seated firmly in the chariot of progress, shall drive the horses of certainty through a world prostrate with wonder and glowing with admiration. Evil will shrivel up under the sun of beauty; violence and greed will be drawn captive by the strains of a new Orpheus. Men will reach out after what is for the common weal, stirred by the proclamation of a new morality. And God shall crown the whole as He looks down with approbation on a world which exists without Him, and for which He has ceased to care. There must be a great First Cause; it will do no harm to call it God. There are many schemes, my brethren, started to-day which assume a power for man which experience and revelation both are unable to assign to him. Any scheme which leaves out God, any scheme which forgets the taint and the warp of sin which must be reckoned with, is not a scheme of progress, but a scheme

of failure, because it means that time will be wasted in recovery and repair, that the errors of one generation will need to be taken out by the next. An army has made no real progress if it has pushed rapidly forward without protecting its advance. A spendthrift has made no advance in life if he has spent all, while making no provision for the future. Slow and exacting are the ways of God; sacraments, worship, discipline, restraint, all seem so much time taken from the activities of life, while in reality they secure their fuller development.

God, who knew what was best for man, because He was man, has nothing new to offer us for the new century. Still, He says to the ardent souls that step eagerly into rank, "Ye must be born again." Still He says to the self-sufficient impulse of the enthusiast, "Without Me ye can do nothing." Still He says to the pushing life seeking for fresh worlds to conquer, "Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you." Still He whispers to the soul, ever restlessly darting off into new pastures and seeking for new paths, "I am the Good Shepherd; if any man love Me, let him follow Me."

Fire will burn in the new century as much as it did in the old. Water will drown,

poison will kill, men will grow old and die as they have done in the past. So sin will scorch, and sorrow wither, and the winds of temptations will riot along with headlong fury, as they have done before. There are few figures more sad and pathetic than those whom we may see returning footsore, dishevelled, and dreary, the remnant of the great army of enthusiasts who start forth at every fresh crisis of the world's history, to find a new scheme for its regeneration. "Thou art the Same." A hundred years of human struggle have created no change in the attitude of God. His laws are immutable. His scheme of redemption embraces all possible developments of human resource. God is not forgetful, but patient. And He is patient because He is eternal.

3. But with us, alas! the disappointment of plans is too often the prelude of despair. There are those who look out on the untrodden fields of the twentieth century with gloom, and sorrow, and distrust. They will tell you everything is wrong, that the forces of disorder are becoming too powerful to be restrained by the forces of order; that nation will be rising against nation and kingdom against kingdom, because these are the last days; that wars will increase and not diminish; that education is a curse and not

a blessing; that we know too much, and that in increasing knowledge we are increasing sorrow; that progress is a progress downwards, not upwards; that perils are threatening family life; that social life is hollow, and business principles hopelessly corrupt; that we are living in Sodom and Gomorrah, and that the fire from heaven is shortly to descend. It is inevitable that men should speak like this if they lose sight of God. It is the reaction which follows on the pride of doing everything, the gloomy conviction that they can do nothing. It would be ungrateful, it would be untrue, it would be wrong thus to enter on the new century. "With God onwards" is our true motto, and a motto that will never fail us. "Trust the future," that is a council of hope, and no man ever did good work yet in which he had lost all hope. There is one thing we can all do, and that is the piece of work which God has put before us. There is a sundial in the midland counties whose face is spread over the front of a beautiful house whose walls are washed by the Ouse as it slowly sinks away past meadow and village on its silent course. There the dial speaks to every one who enters in at the door with a motto, abrupt and rude, almost a discourtesy to the arriving guest, but yet

charged with a meaning which may make him think—"Go about your business." This is the message which comes from light, light which is the shadow of God as it falls across our life to-day, announcing the coming of another break in the allotted measure of our time. "Go about your business." It is possible to waste time in sentiment, and to be managing the affairs of the empire in our mind, when our immediate duty was to sweep away the dirt before our own door. So Elijah was recalled from his melancholy dream of universal corruption, and of a nation rushing on its doom, to the sense of his own position and the immediate requirements of his duty. "Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus; and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria; and Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-Meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room." It is well to think of the Church, of the nation, of the empire, of the world; but there is one bit of improvement at which we can always labour—ourselves.

The year past has been full of troubles and full of mercies. "My song shall be of mercy and judgment: unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing." Few of us can have seen

unmoved the spectacle here, when we sent out our citizen soldiers with prayer and supplication to the war, and received them back again with praise and thanksgiving within these hallowed walls. These were not the actions of a nation that had forgotten God. And the prayer and praises which then ascended were not the ebullition of excitement or the product of a theatrical display. It has been a year of turbulent controversy in the Church? Yes! perhaps so. One or two people can make a great noise; the hard workers go on doing their work quietly; they know too much the imperfections of their own work to have even the wish to disturb their neighbours'. Wherever there has been a serious endeavour to work for God, Religion, and His Church, there have been signs most hopeful and encouraging, of the very best feeling, and of the greatest desire for amity. The meeting at Fulham to discuss differences was the earnest of much solid good for the Church. It approached them in the true way, with prayer and mutual respect, with reverence for a controversial adversary, and an honest endeavour to find points of agreement. The great religious heart of this nation is on the side of unity, not of agitation. It knows the problems and

difficulties of life too well to exaggerate trifles; a nation which has clothed its army with khaki and given up the tradition of the thin red line, knows full well that the conditions of warfare vary even if the strife is the same. Respect for truth, respect for honour, respect for one's neighbour's purity of life, love for God and His Word, love for our holy Religion: these in our own lives are the things which will make themselves felt rather than a listless dreaming as we lean upon the barrier and look out into the night. The region of the "may be" is well-nigh infinite, the region of the "must be" is limited for you and me, and, for the most part, within our reach and cognisance. Look back in earnestness, look forward in confidence. God is the Same; God is where He was before. The twentieth century comes to us with the same old message, ever more and more venerable, ever more and more true—"Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."





VI

THE CITIZENSHIP OF HEAVEN



## VI

### THE CITIZENSHIP OF HEAVEN

A SERMON PREACHED IN S. PAUL'S  
CATHEDRAL, ADVENT, 1894.

“For our conversation is in heaven.”—PHIL. iii. 20.

WHEN Gibbon is assigning his five well-known causes for the growth of Christianity, he gives as the second the doctrine of a future life, which, he says, induced men to despise their present existence, and fix all their hopes on immortality beyond the grave. And, indeed, in a sneering way he insinuates that this too great care for a future life led them to neglect onerous duties and public service which no State could admit with impunity; for the prosaic duties of life were neglected in order to attend to the enervating demands of religion.

It would not be difficult to show how con-

trary this is to the spirit of Christianity, however true it may be of the abuse and misapplication of Christian ideas; but at the present day surely the tendency is all the other way. The vision of Heaven as a practical influence on life and conduct is shadowy and indistinct. Men seem more in sympathy with those who looked for a millennium, a reign of Christ upon a purified earth, from which suffering and imperfection have been banished. And the duties of religion and the expenditure of thought upon another world are looked upon as so much waste of time, which might be devoted to material, economical, sanitary, and moral improvements. If you asked the average man what he thought about Heaven, he would probably tell you that he had not much time to think about it at all. "I strive," he would say, "to do my duty as well as I can here, to be straightforward and honest, and keep from gross sin; I am doing all I can to help my family, and try to do good to my fellow-creatures, and then when I can live here no longer I shall have an illness, perhaps the clergyman will come and read the Bible to me, I shall die, and I hope to go to Heaven." And this going to Heaven, what is it? But going to a place in which he can feel but little interest, in the hope that in some way death will effect a complete revo-

lution, in taste, feelings, desires, and occupations; that things will interest him then which are distinctly distasteful to him now; and that things which occupy all his thoughts now will then cease to affect him. We die, that is, to all intents and purposes, thorough men of the world; we wake up thorough men of Heaven.

Can this be the true aim which God has persistently set before us when He gave us the thought and promise of Heaven? Is it something to spoil our life of duty here, while we live in the distracted state of a man who does one thing while he is busily thinking of another? Is it a place, a state, so shadowy and unreal, that we keep it as an ornament of life under a glass case while we bustle about the realities of existence, and try to make this world a better place, instead of dreaming about another which has not yet come before us? Is it a mere refuge to which in imagination we betake ourselves as something better than Hell, a place to which, if we dared, we would fain, like the Indian savage, take our horses and our food and our treasures, as something which we can more fully understand than the mystical suggestions of the Book of Revelation with its religious raptures?

## I.

My brethren, if we are to believe the Apostle's statement which I have just read to you, Heaven is begun already. Our conversation, our citizenship is in Heaven ; as he tells us elsewhere, " Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints." Heaven is begun here to the Christian. He is a member of that community already ; he is a citizen of that city. There is an upper and a lower city and an intermediate zone, but still one city. At death we do but change our quarters, while we continue our life in unbroken identity in the commonwealth of Heaven. St. Paul was using a metaphor which conveyed to him and to his hearers a very real meaning. It was at Philippi, a Roman colony, that he obtained that satisfaction and redress which belonged to him by right of his Roman citizenship. He knew what it was to be able to assert wherever he went his share in that marvellous life of discipline and order which extended to the very edge of the Roman empire. He could claim thereby protection from insult and violence, and a share in their interests and triumphs which made every Roman hold his head higher and carry, as it

were, stamped on his face, the consciousness of his proud citizenship.

It is somewhat humiliating to think how little we claim our rights as citizens of a greater commonwealth, how little its conquests affect us, its progress helps us, its interests move us, its influences cheer us; there it is, an exaggerated, distorted, unreal impression, an impalpable phantom in the night of death; whereas, could we but feel it, it encircles us in its strength, protects us by its laws, enriches the paths of life, regulates our activities, uses our powers, and smoothes the bed of death—this commonwealth of beneficence, felt rather than seen; by reason of which the world is a better place to you and to me than it would otherwise have been; whereby, of the Lord's mercies, we are not consumed, nor wander hopelessly from the path.

“While sunk in sin and whelmed with strife,  
We lose the gift of endless life.”

This inability to realise Heaven is surely one part of what has been described as the poverty of life. “We can make much of life,” it has been said, “if we have much soul.” To some, life is only real in so far as it is a field for appetite and passion, a place for eating, and drinking, and satisfaction. The wide fields of

art and poetry are practically non-existent to them. Science with its fascinating discoveries, history with its moving panorama passing over familiar scenes, all the various departments of human intelligence, are a blank or a positive horror. They "think that it is to give them wood to hew, and water to draw, that the pine forests cover the mountains like the shadow of God, and the great rivers move like His Eternity." While to others, life is only a business warehouse, touched by none of the generous impulses of self-devotion, stirred and quickened by no sympathy with human life around it. Virtue becomes to them the highest form of utilitarian self-aggrandisement; no man will do you any good except for his own interest; merit becomes merely one man's opinion of another, self-devotion a mere fanaticism, liberality an ignorance of the value of money, and good works generally a dangerous form of sin. We must have known men who live, as it were, in only a corner of their possessions, in an absolute poverty of resource, fast confined in a narrow cell, neither understanding nor understood, alone, apart in the concourse of men, surrounded by wealth which they cannot appreciate, with sources of enjoyment they know not how to use, with instruments of beauty which they know not how to manipulate. Can any



outward poverty compare with this inner poverty which touches not the circumstances of life, but a poverty which leaves the wealthiest beggared in thought in the midst of his splendour, and the wisest destitute of sympathy in the midst of his intellectual triumph? But there is a poverty even beyond this, the poverty of the man who has dropped out of touch with Heaven, whose thoughts are bounded by this earth, whose horizon is death, with a Heaven beyond in which practically he has ceased to believe, who has no cheering vision of a central controlling movement, no sense of heavenly rights, no realisation of heavenly protection; "a citizen of no mean city," still he lets himself be bound, insulted, and imprisoned, he pays to it no duty, it owes him no privileges. An end in himself to himself, he would regard a present Heaven of practical relationships as even more visionary and unreal than a future Heaven, which offers him neither in principle nor in practice any appreciable point of contact, nor stimulates any strong desire.

## II.

If, then Heaven lies about us here, to be consciously enjoyed by those who live in the lower city, and to be more fully realised when

they move higher, in what does it consist? How does it make itself felt? How shall we exercise our citizenship and enjoy our privileges? (1) As citizens of Heaven we are in the immediate presence of God. "Whither shall I go then from Thy Spirit:" says the Psalmist, "or whither shall I go then from Thy Presence? If I climb up into Heaven, Thou art there: if I go down to Hell, Thou art there also; if I take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea: even there also shall Thy hand lead me: and Thy right hand shall hold me." We have wondered, it may be, in the visions and revelations of Heaven which have been put before us, how large a part worship seems to play in the occupation of the blessed. Worship surely is the characteristic occupation of the soul which has realised the Presence of God; the more we are able to see Him, the more we shall be driven to worship, until in Heaven above, when our eyes have been accustomed to face the light, and we are more and more able to see Him as He is, worship becomes almost the absorbing occupation of the redeemed. And so here, the more we feel God's Presence the more we shall be attracted to worship Him. It is when worship has been degraded into a mere hearing of sounds, or listening to a human voice, or an intellectual posture of

the mind, that it becomes weary and insipid. Now with an effort we have to force ourselves to worship as a duty, but the more we can feel His Presence, the more we shall be impelled to it as a pleasure, and be able to realise how it may possibly be that the satisfaction of the highest part of our being may be the highest joy, and to worship God without distraction, and enjoy His Presence without fear, may be the highest conception of Heaven. This Presence of God, how it was meant to enrich and beautify all our life! Account for it as you will, how many of the Christian martyrs again and again experienced a peace and even joy under the most cruel tortures, to the perplexity and exasperation of their enemies, and they said it was brought to them by the Presence of God. Explain it as you will, men and women have lingered on in abject want, suffering, and affliction, in circumstances from which every ray of earthly comfort seemed to have gone, not merely in sullen resignation, but in joyful acquiescence and holy calm, so that the room of suffering has sometimes been the brightest room in the whole house, and they will tell you that it was the Presence of God that brought this calm. There may be in the lives of many of you memories of a pleasure which you cannot define, of a satisfaction which you cannot analyse, days when

you did not look for pleasure, but yet you found joy; days when all seemed dark, and yet there rose up light in the darkness; days which you can only look back upon as "days of the Son of Man," when life was illumined by a heavenly glow, and filled with a satisfaction which you had hitherto failed to reach, and you trace in them the Presence of God.

What shall we say of the mystery of natural beauty all around us, of beauty in art, of beauty wherever we see it? What is beauty, and what does it mean? Is it for nothing or by a fortuitous combination of causes that God gives us the daily pageant of sunrise and sunset, lighting up fields and hedges, sea and mountain, transforming the very squalor of the streets and courts of the city, and speaking to the hearts of those who can feel, to the eyes of all that can see? Is it for nothing that God has put His mantle of flowers between us and the bareness of the earth, and His veil of clouds between us and the blinding brightness of the sky? It is the same God who speaks to us out of the poetry of the Bible, who speaks to us out of the beauty of the world; and He who makes the flower to glow speaks to us out of the beauty of art, the beauty of music, the beauty of moral character. Trace beauty wherever you see it far enough, and it will lead you into the Presence of God

until you forget self and forget your needs, and praise Him for what He is, and adore Him for His transcendent Majesty, so that there mingles with the voice of supplication and the voice of gratitude the voice of thanksgiving, which can only express itself in the words of the Seraphic hymn, "The fulness of the whole earth is His glory." To those who can feel the Presence of God as it encircles us with its power and beauty, Heaven itself has begun.

(2) But as citizens of Heaven we do more than repose in the Presence of God; we rest under His protection. Heaven is the great city of refuge, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. And the protection of Heaven is begun here to those who claim its privileges and have a right to its citizenship. It is a sad spectacle to see the unwilling sinner driven away captive by sins which are too strong for him, with a system of morality clear and well defined, torn up and tossed about like straws before the wind upon the wild waves of passion. It is sad to see man, made in the image and likeness of God, a free-man of the empire of Heaven, marched away like a slave beaten and condemned by evil. We ourselves before now, it may be, have sat down paralyzed before evils which we seemed powerless to surmount, before habits which we had failed to eradicate, beaten in spite

of ourselves, and at last acquiescing in a lower standard, thinking the higher life to be impossible, perhaps undesirable, yet haunted by the idea that we had failed of the highest, and were maimed in our powers. Surely the citizenship of Heaven, the presence and the inspiration of Heaven, ought to make itself felt here. "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?" This is what a Roman citizen might say. "Is it lawful for you to scourge a citizen of Heaven, and uncondemned?" This is what a Christian may say. All around us and about us, did we but feel it, is the protection of Heaven. There is no divided empire here. God has not ceded his rights in certain provinces and departments of human life. God does not say to a man, "You were born bad, you have lived bad, and in all human probability you will die bad; you are the victim of hereditary contagion of sin. You cannot help yourself, and I cannot help you." No, God has not resigned His empire over the mysteries of transmitted life. The contagion has been noted, and the remedy has been planned. The transmission of characteristics and the transmission of taint has been seized in His hands, and made the basis of spiritual transformation. God does not say to a man, 'I can do nothing for you; you are living in

a barbarous region, where you have no chance of development, where the atmosphere is evil and the contagion wholly poisonous, where only evil can spring up, and only evil thrive, and only evil survive to the end.' He has not surrendered His empire over the barbarous regions of the earth. As if to show us from time to time how wide is the extent of the atmosphere of Heaven, He shows us a saintly life shining out in the wreck of a moral avalanche, or thrusting its head like a flower through the snow. It is here, indeed, that God raises the hardy sons of His empire with an endurance and force of character which results from heavenly influence acting on adverse circumstances; it is here that He raises His heroes, as of old He raised His judges out of the tribe nearest to and most threatened by the enemy. No, God cannot yield any part of His empire to a specious fatalism. God cannot suffer that men should reproach His justice and love with a cruel predestination to eternal loss because He has planted His citizens amidst adverse surroundings. This is to return to the barest Calvinism. Ah, my brethren, do not listen to the pleadings of slavish impotence. The child of God, wherever he may be, is free—

“Our wills are ours, we know not how,  
Our wills are ours to make them Thine.”

When you give way to that violent temper you are not the victim of a congenital passion. You are a free citizen of Heaven submitting to be bound where God has made you free. When you fail miserably to curb your appetite, and are driven along with the throng under the sounding lash of Satan, you are not the victim of society; you would not have done better in other circumstances. The will has become enslaved which God made free, and the citizen of Heaven is yielding to a power which has no right to enthrall him. Many and many a soul looks forward in impotent longing for a time of freedom from overmastering sin. Let him listen to St. Paul—“Our citizenship is in Heaven.” No taint of nature, no force of circumstances, no onslaught of temptation, can overwhelm the citizen of Heaven who throws himself back on his citizenship and relies on his rights. There is a strong government all around him, and a firm protection that reaches the very utmost edges of the territory of duty. There is peace, we all know in Heaven. But we may also know that “When a man’s ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.”<sup>1</sup> Seat the will firmly on the throne, and trust in the Presence of God. And then even an evil taint may be transformed

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xvi. 7.



into power, and an evil surrounding be the stern mother of a character which out of evil has drawn only strength.

(3) "Our citizenship is in Heaven"; our view instinctively widens as we grasp these words. Heaven, then, is not a hermit's cell, whither I escape by resolutely turning my back on all that hinders or detains me, which I reach at last by casting off every encumbrance, and every duty, by a feverish anxiety to secure my personal salvation. Heaven is a city, and Heaven has its constitution and its citizens all around me. I move as one of a vast throng. I move as one who is influenced by the lives of others, and who, in turn, sheds an influence out of his own life, as he fills a post in a vast community, and discharges a function in a great commonwealth. There it lies in the Creed, practically unmeaning to most people who pronounce it, virtually otiose, and redundant in a document otherwise so condensed—"I believe in the communion of saints." How seldom we pause to think of what we owe to the past; if we think of the men of the past at all it is to smile at their maimed life and their imperfect ideas, their crude civilisation, their feeble grasp upon the treasures of life. But what we owe to the past, daily and hourly, who shall say? The very Creed which we utter was hammered out by men who had reached

its truth in their own experience, and never rested until they had made it explicit, using themselves all the stored-up riches of the past, so that "the doctrine of the Trinity was the synthesis and summary of all that was highest in the Hebrew and Hellenic conception of God fused into union by the electric touch of the Incarnation." What a debt do we owe to the past again in those who did not think of this island of ours as merely a place to plunder, but a region to be evangelised with the good news of salvation! What a debt we owe to the great men who have made this kingdom what it is, who built us churches, who endowed our holy Religion with their money for ever, who adorned it with the beauty of a good life! What a debt we owe to that cloud of witnesses drawn up from the rapid river of life, its stagnant pools, its foul marshes, until they became the glory of the firmament of the Christian Church!

If we paused to see how many lives and influences act upon our own character alone, we should see how great is the company which surrounds us now in the citizenship of Heaven. Education opens for us a door to the great minds of the world, of the past and present, who being dead yet speak to us in books, or who, living and unknown to us, are yet with us in their writings. The influence of books

alone might shed around us a very atmosphere of Heaven, and prevent us from ever feeling lonely and forsaken. While we are painfully conscious of the encroachments that Satan is ever making here, in infidel books, in immoral books, in books which destroy moral dignity, frivolous, worthless, degrading, in the almost limitless company to which education has introduced us, it is our own fault if we fail to surround ourselves with the company which speaks the dignified, stately language of Heaven. And if education brings us the companionship of books, the mind can also give us the inspiration of example. The Church has her calendar of saints who have passed through the same scenes as those through which we are passing, and out of the same passions and the same temptations have produced, by the grace of God, the dignity of a saintly life. The world has its heroes, who have made tradition, its philanthropists, who have consecrated benevolence, its pioneers, and explorers, and inventors, who have developed its resources. The good life is not the lonely contest we are sometimes tempted to think it, not the mere struggling through the waves to the unknown shore, on a thin plank of life, saved out of the full ship from which we have tossed pleasure after pleasure, the wheat and the tacking, and our

very self, in order to be saved. The communion of saints is an influence all around us, it is Heaven begun on earth; only it is incumbent on us to make the good life more a present power, to let our light shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in Heaven. If we feel lonely, there are others lonely too; every good life fearlessly lived, makes it easier for some other life to glorify God. When we approach God it is as "*Our Father*," and we ask God to have mercy upon *us*, not upon *me*. It is a thing to labour for, and live for, to make the signs of God's kingdom, its cries of victory, and its shouts of triumph, its voices of blessing, and its beautiful strains just as prominent as the shouts of ribaldry, and the roar of vice, the hideousness and the coarseness and the ugliness of sin, which make the citizen of Heaven now seem but a stranger and a pilgrim in an alien world. Heaven is worth living for, but Heaven is no dream of a sick man who has lost, or of a prisoner who has failed, or of a visionary who cannot enjoy life, Heaven is around us and about us now, and when we die, the earth will fall away from us like a jealous curtain which has hid some grand beauty; and Paradise will lead us into the full enjoyment of the perfect Vision. God makes up the beauty and joy of Heaven, and

God is here to be found at the end of the avenues of worship, and at the end of every path of true beauty, which ends in Him. The absence of evil is a negative joy of Heaven; it means the omnipotence of the hand of God, and that hand is omnipotent here.

Heaven is filled with the glorious cloud of saints, and is rich in the citizenship of the blessed. Here, too, consciously or unconsciously, each man moves onwards, formed and fashioned by the countless influences of many lives. Do we hope at last to go to Heaven? If we will but "find God," we are there already.



VII

THE KING





## VII

### THE KING

A SERMON PREACHED IN S. PAUL'S  
CATHEDRAL IN AUGUST, 1902.

“God save the King.”—1 SAM. x. 3.

IT is difficult while passing through stirring events to estimate them at their true importance. We cannot get the right historical perspective, because we stand too close to the mountains and valleys through which we are journeying; and so it has been that not unfrequently the actors in some of the greatest dramas of history have been unconscious of the significance of the acts which they were performing. So we read of the disciples of our Lord, who took part in the historical scenes of Palm Sunday, “These things understood not His disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of Him, and

that they had done these things unto Him.”<sup>1</sup> Our Blessed Lord is constrained to impress upon His followers the importance of events in which they were participators, and whose significance they might easily misunderstand when He says, “Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: for I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.”<sup>2</sup> No one, however, who thinks at all is likely to forget the scenes through which we have been passing this year. It does not need a great deal of historical acumen to see that the Coronation of King Edward VII. of England will stand out even in our remarkable national history as an event of peculiar and pathetic importance. We have been accused by a friendly, if somewhat cynical, critic of applying to ourselves as a nation all the promises of favour and the dignity of responsibility which God bestowed on His chosen people, the Jews, in the days of their faithfulness and trial. It would be strange if we had reaped no benefit from our national study of and veneration for the Bible; and without claiming for this country that it enjoys the privilege of being a nation dear to God, and a direct heir

<sup>1</sup> S. John xii. 16.

<sup>2</sup> S. Luke x. 23, 24.

of His promises, yet we have learned to read in the warnings and punishments, in the blessings and promises which He gave to the chosen people of old, the signs of God's Presence and the interposition of His hand in national events. We have learned that nations, as well as individuals, live in His sight charged with responsibilities for which they will be judged. We have learned that national vices are followed by national punishment; we have learned that national neglect of religion is likely to precede a national downfall. And so we have felt in the great disappointment which fell on us in the early summer something more than a dislocation of plans which spoiled the pleasure of all, and was of serious consequence to many. We have learned to see in it the interposition of God. Everything was ready for the Coronation but ourselves. And God in His love has interposed, until we learned by greater humility and seriousness how to take our part in the solemn plighting of troth between the King and his people, in the great consecration of our Sovereign to God, so that we could learn that the title with which we honour our monarchs is no vain and insignificant form of words, but that our anointed Sovereign may be called without impropriety, "our most religious and gracious King."

My brethren, if the Coronation which God Almighty has now allowed us to witness was shorn somewhat of its outward magnificence, we cannot doubt that it gained wonderfully in deep spiritual solemnity. A king whom God has restored to us from the jaws of death was crowned in the presence of his people, who had asked him from the Lord, and who believed that God had been gracious unto their prayers ; and, therefore, it is well surely, at a time like this, that we should once more remind ourselves of the real meaning of the ceremony of Coronation, in which every inhabitant of this Empire is directly concerned. Archæologists will tell us of the great antiquity and religious significance of the rites of sacring. Historians will help us to link the present to the past. Cynics will tell us that the Coronation is a survival of obsolete ideas, and that the whole nation is greater than any one monarch. The foolish and light-hearted will bid us congratulate ourselves that we have seen an interesting pageant, and a brilliant if maimed display. But surely as religious people, in a matter in which we have seen so visibly displayed the hand of God, we ought to seek for its moral significance, and its religious importance, and to see if we can learn to say with something more than loyalty, something more permanent than enthusiasm—" God save the King."

## I.

What then does the person of the King represent to us, clothed with all the insignia and majesty of supreme greatness? What of the crown, the sceptre and the orb, the sword, the sacerdotal vestments, the anointing oil—are they so many theatrical properties from the archæological and historical treasuries? We know better than this; we know that besides his personal qualities, the King is the representative and embodiment of certain impersonal and important principles, and among these we reckon first in the person of the King the majesty and dignity of law. He is the fountain of a nation's law, the supreme embodiment of its liberty and privileges based on law. In looking back over our chequered history we see the fierce nature of the conflict which has raged round this conception of the regal office. Our King does not reign as a despot in defiance of his people's rights, but as the living embodiment of all that they most venerate and cling to. There are many sad epitaphs to be found in our cathedrals and churches, telling of quenched hopes and forfeited ideals; there are monuments which breathe still the anguish of personal sorrow and which seems to tell of a life from which

the sunshine has gone for ever. There is that touching gravestone in the cloisters of Westminster, where a broken heart pours out its sorrow over the grave of a much-loved daughter—"a dear child," so runs the simple inscription. There is the famous *miserimus* in the cloisters of Worcester, where the nameless occupant of a grave, trodden by the feet of passers-by, has willed that all that should be known of him is his great misery. But there is a sadder tomb still in that beautiful Midland Cathedral, which looks across the Severn to where the sun dips behind the Malvern Hills. And that is the grave of King John. There he lies in front of the high altar, in glory of sculpture and gold, hoping to wrest a posthumous protection from the wrath of God, by the monk's frock in which he is shrouded, seeking the companionship of saints in his death whom he despised and dishonoured in his life.

There is, perhaps, none of our kings who for his personal life and public dishonour is more execrated. In him it was by force and armed compulsion that the fount of law which is represented by the idea of kingship ran in proper channels, and answered to its great ideals. And yet if King John were alive to-day, in so far as he represented our legitimate rights and liberties, we should still

say, "God save the King," because we should forget the indignity of the man, in the glory and beauty of the authority with which he was invested.

My brethren, as children we were accustomed to read history with an eye to the stirring incidents of the battlefields, and the struggles of kings and people in all the moving incidents of the public tragedies which surround a nation's growth, and as we get older we shall find that these struggles lose none of their interest, they gain in importance, as the conflict of liberty with oppression, of order with disorder, now on this side, now on that. We mark in them the gradual evolution of a clearer idea of what is meant by a monarch, in his supreme character as the guardian and fountain of law; we see the diminution by slow degrees of the idea of personal irresponsible power, and the quenching of the lust of greed and oppression, and the emerging of the figure of dignity and religion, under which a nation venerates the conception of her liberty.

My brethren, have we learned yet all the beauty and grandeur which lie expressed in that sacred name — law? When the old Greeks looked out on this magnificent universe in which all things perform their ordered functions, they called the world by a name

which signified order, as if that were the main and pervading characteristic which was stamped upon its Divine mechanism. To them, even more perfectly than to the Jew, "The heavens declared the glory of God, and the firmament showed His handiwork." "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world (were) clearly seen, being understood by the things that were made, even His eternal power and Godhead."<sup>1</sup> The reign of law, of perfect, unswerving law, excited their veneration and awe; it was magnificent, it was divine. And so we are accustomed still in more intimate and hidden ways to trace the action of the Holy Spirit in the regions of order and discipline within the soul. The Spirit of God which once moved upon the face of the waters when order emerged from chaos still rules over the hearts and lives of those who give themselves up to His gentle guidance.

My brethren, while we honour this great principle of law and order in the person of our King, whom we crown and consecrate, let us see to it that we honour every manifestation of it in our own lives. It is a sorry thing to contend for the liberty of the subject, and maintain the long conflict for the integrity of our laws, if at the same time we are living the life of slaves, in a voluntary

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 1. 20.



subjection to the tyranny of evil. The struggles of the nation for freedom and for liberty are paralleled in the life of many a man to-day, with a very diverse issue of the conflict. The supremacy of law, within the circle of his own life, is the inherent birth-right of every man. We are born free, but the issue of life's struggle too often leaves us slaves. There was a pathos in the question which Pilate addressed to our Blessed Lord, who was brought before him, in all the cruel indignities of His Passion, "Art Thou a King, then?"<sup>1</sup> The Roman, with his ideas of luxury and magnificence, freedom, and even licence, could hardly bring himself to believe in a King crowned with thorns, bound with cords, and forsaken by all outward insignia of royalty. And yet there reigned within that stricken form the magnificent supremacy which belongs to a perfect man, of which Pilate knew but little and valued less. My brethren, at least let us say "God save the King" with the lips of free-men. Let us at least venerate the fount of law, as those who know the blessings of law in our inmost selves. It is a turbulent kingdom which God has called upon you to rule. There are fierce passions which were designed to serve under your kingship, which are only

<sup>1</sup> S. John xviii. 37.

too ready to rise in rebellion and oust the ruler from his throne. There sits the will, on its seat of authority, guided by reason, and illuminated by the spirit. Is it supreme within its own domain? There are some who have lost all control over the rough and tributary senses, who cower before their vassal Passion, and submit their will to the degradation of force. There are some who have lost large portions of the domain of their life, who have submitted to see fair fields and flourishing territories snatched away from the dominion of the will. Not many hundred yards from this Cathedral there once existed that strange region known as Alsatia, with which the pen of the novelist and the brilliant pages of Macaulay have made us familiar, that region in which the king's writ did not run, the abode of criminal disorder and vice. So many a man has elevated his besetting sin into an Alsatia, an abode of privileged misdeeds, where the will gives no order, and the law of God makes no challenge.

My brethren, at this Coronation time I appeal for a larger and more whole-hearted veneration for law and order within the kingdom of our own lives. Let us have no Alsatias, no privileged sins, no times, or places, or moods which are outside the

beneficent rule of law. Let us bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. And then it will be, as men who know what they say, who know what law is, in this world of God's creating, who know what liberty is to a people, and what supremacy means to the will, that we shall be able to say, "God save the King," and recognise in an anointed King the embodiment of our greatest national treasure, the sacredness of law and the inviolability of our liberties.

## II.

The King, once more, is the representative to us of our national traditions. The history of the nation hangs round it like a necklace, studded with glorious jewels, which represent the traditions which have been worked out of its long and chequered career. There are memories of struggles at home and abroad, of some of which we are ashamed, of most of which we are proud. We remember how, in the very place where we are standing, the expiring struggle of heathenism, the advancing powers of Christianity, the bitterness of religious and civil strife have all left their mark on history. Here kings and

queens have come to return thanks for national mercies received. Within only the last few years, we remember the thanksgiving service for the King's recovery from the illness which threatened his life when he was Prince of Wales. We, in more recent times, still have seen here intercessions, supplications, and thanksgivings, in times of our tribulation, and in times of our wealth. Nelson and Wellington lie buried in our crypt, to remind us of the European struggle which made such an impression on our national sentiment and showed England the great destiny she was called upon to fulfil. Many of us can remember the horrors and anxieties of the Crimean War, and the still greater horrors of the Indian Mutiny. And we thank God that while seldom free from some form of war in some part of our vast empire, God has mercifully shielded us from the horrors of war in our own island. The battle of Sedgemoor in Somerset, fought in the Rebellion of Monmouth in the days of James II., is generally regarded as the last serious battle fought in our own land; for which we may, indeed, thank God, when we see what war means, as, for instance, to the sunny plains of France in the awful struggle of 1870, or in South Africa in the horrors and destruction of the war now

happily and gloriously concluded. Through long centuries of struggle, of blessings received and warnings given, we do feel that there has emerged a great tradition which we are pledged to maintain, and of which our crowned King is the personal representative. We do not as a nation care much for glory; it is an evanescent and intoxicating sentiment which is foreign to our character. We seem, on the contrary, to be almost cynically indifferent to the hostile criticism of our national actions, which we are at the same time powerless to avert. But, thank God, there has emerged as the permanent tradition of our race, and as the prevailing symbolism of our national flag, the sense of duty. Any Englishman, however humble a post he may occupy in the Empire, feels that he has to maintain the tradition of law and justice which we have secured for ourselves at such a cost, and through such long centuries of struggle. The motto which is traced beneath the three feathers of the Prince of Wales's well-known crest, "I serve," may well be taken as the motto of the whole nation. It is not true that as a nation we are urged forward by a lust of annexation, and a land-fever of conquest. Those little marks of red on the map of the world at least represent places

where there are equal rights for all who come under the protection of our flag; where politically, at all events, and however imperfectly, we are spelling out the lesson which S. Paul, under the inspiration of God, imparted to his sceptical audience at Athens: "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth."<sup>1</sup> However we fail in its practical application, however imperfect may be our realisation of our responsibilities, still it is something to feel that it is the great tradition of our race, that England expects that every man shall do his duty, and that greed and injustice, where and if they exist, exist only in defiance of our most cherished national principles. My brethren, both nations and men are the better for being the guardian of a tradition. The constraining force of an inherent nobility, the sacred compulsion of loyalty to a tradition, are immense powers for good to the nation and to the individual who are influenced by them. We recognise it in the national monuments which we erect to keep alive the glorious memories of the past; we recognise it in the almost religious homage which we pay to the national flag; we recognise it in the devoted loyalty shown to the regimental

<sup>1</sup> Acts xvii. 26.

colours, such as those which repose here in this House of God, now that their work is done, and only the inspiration of their tradition remains. It is with a pang that we see the names of noble families tarnished, or a son bringing discredit on the fair name of his father. Every man is better for a tradition in his life. The novelist has traced for us with merciless accuracy the career of a man who fell from bad to worse, largely because he had no tradition in his life; who never could remember the time when he was not indolent and self-pleasing; who had no battlefields of struggle, no records of victory to help him with the strength of a tradition, or the memories of outlived sorrows. And so he fell, as one who is alone when he falls, and who has nothing to keep him up, or anything of which he should say, 'God forbid that I should be false to my better self, or betray my nobler past.'

My brethren, if you have such traditions in your life, cherish them, I beseech you. They will be as much a source of strength to you as the memory of his victory over the lion and the bear in childhood was a strength to David in his greater struggle with the giant. Cherish the home memories, which are often so great a tradition to Englishmen. Think how often it is recorded in the history of a

king's success, or more often, alas! of his failure, in the Bible, that his mother's name was this or that. Think when you are tempted to forget honour and manhood, and to sell your birthright for a mess of pottage, of the shame and sorrow which the knowledge of such treachery would bring at home. Think of it as a betrayal of family honour, and as an impiety to some of the most sacred memories of your life. Here is one of the strongest ties which bind a man to purity and truth, that there are prophecies which have gone before on him,<sup>1</sup> and that he grasps at his sordid pleasure only by pushing aside the glory of his best tradition. There are also definite religious traditions within the lives of most of us which claim our loyalty and uphold our integrity. Days of solemn resolution and especial grace, such as the day of our Confirmation, days of the Son of Man with all their bright glow, such as the days of our Communion. To these we owe the homage of loyalty, as the very framework of our better existence, on which is built up that self which is eternal, and the life which is to last for ever. But every one who is not a mere creature of circumstances, tossed to and fro on the rough waves of the world, has his own special traditions, which will stand him in

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. i. 18.



good stead in the battle of life, and will help him in the evolution of character. Under the name of principle we all of us recognise with an instinctive homage a tradition which it is only honourable for a man to maintain. A temptation to a degraded sensuality loses half its malignity when it comes to a man, not as an isolated experience in a multiform career, but as a blow aimed at a cherished principle of life and a uniform course of action. It is an immense strength for a man to be able to say to the enticer, 'I never have yielded to that kind of temptation yet, and I am not going to begin now.' It is an immense support to a life of integrity, to be able to meet the specious appeal to a supposed profit in dishonesty by an honest repudiation which can say, 'I have never done a dishonest action yet, nor told a lie, and it would be contrary to all my principles to do so.' How is a good habit formed, but by a constant appeal to a uniform tradition, working in one direction, which does not depend on whim or caprice, but on a definite course deliberately chosen and consistently maintained, until it becomes a second nature? There is a strength in tradition, which the powers of evil know, even if we do not, as they thrust in face of what the man may become, the numbing influence of what he has been, and what he is.

It is folly to ignore so potent an influence in making or marring our life. One of our greatest national treasures is the glorious tradition which is the heritage of our race, and therefore once more, as the depositary of that tradition, and as the upholder of its integrity, we say of him whose Coronation we acclaim to-day, "God save the King."

### III.

But we must not forget that human nature being what it is, and our English nation being what it is, there has gathered round the sentiment of our loyalty a depth of personal feeling for the individual sovereign. Not officially only, but personally, out of respect and affection for the reigning monarch; where that has not been made impossible, we have loved to say, "God save the King."

We, none of us, are likely to forget the great personal devotion which all classes of Englishmen and Englishwomen displayed towards our late Queen. Her throne, if any, was reared up in the hearts of her people. We have read of also, and can appreciate, the extraordinary devotion which burned in the hearts of many at all events of his subjects, towards the ill-fated Charles I. English

people have been proud of such a Queen as Elizabeth, or have admired the prowess of a Richard I., or even the undaunted determination of a William the Conqueror; and certainly that heart would be cold indeed which refused to go out in personal affection to the touching appeal which the King has made to the sympathies of his people in the letter which he has addressed to them on his recovery from a dangerous sickness so courageously borne. Nor is this a merely sentimental affection. We know how earnestly our King has always laboured for, as he has always deeply sympathised with, the cause of the sick and afflicted in our hospitals. It is a sad and humiliating page of our history which Sir Walter Besant, in his preface to "Suffering London," has put before us in all its naked significance, which treats of the suppression of our hospitals in this city of ours, where old institutions of mercy and love were ruthlessly pillaged and their revenues dispersed, in one of the most disgraceful epochs of our history, and private greed left London bereft of any sort of institution for the relief of our suffering poor. We shall not soon forget the efforts which our present Sovereign has made in restoring and re-endowing our present hospitals, and in bringing to bear the personal influence of his

great name on their permanent improvement. It is not a little significant that his people, in seeking a present for his Coronation most near to his heart, should have agreed that this present should take the form of a gift of money to the London Hospitals. Here is a trait in our Sovereign's character which, with many others, will add a personal strain to the acclamation with which we hail him as Sovereign. But we feel now, even more, that he has risen from his sick-bed bound to us by closer ties of sympathy, and with even greater claims to our tenderness and personal affection. As Christians, we have been taught to believe that suffering is a special badge of favour from God, bestowed on those whom the King delights to honour. And we welcome him now in the dignity of suffering, and in the appeal of his late weakness, as one who, from personal experience, can sympathise, even more than he did before, with that great majority of his subjects who are called upon to suffer; and while he asks us to work together with God in doing all that we can to alleviate pain and combat sickness in spreading the advantages of the scientific treatment of disease, he also appeals to us by that which has become one of the traditions of his royal race, which came to us as a message from the bed of death of a brave Emperor, whom God

had called upon to endure one of the severest forms of bodily disease, "Learn to suffer without complaint."

My brethren, in crowning our King, we crown the majesty of law, we crown the greatness of our tradition, and the glory of our race, but we also crown one who has mounted the steps of his throne, straight from the shaping tenderness of the loving hand of God.

And, therefore, with all our hearts we say :  
"God save the King."



VIII

THE GOD OF GLORY





## VIII

### THE GOD OF GLORY

PREACHED IN S. PAUL'S IN ADVENT, 1901.

“Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors: and the King of Glory shall come in.”—  
PSA. xxiv. 9.

IT has been said that in our modern world God is very seldom spoken of as beautiful. The old Jews, whose religion so many now affect to despise, reposed on the beauty, the majesty, the glory of God. We are afraid of God, we hope to get certain advantages from Him. We talk sometimes of His love and of His providence. But our hearts seldom follow our lips when we sing, “Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ.” “Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.” “We worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory.” Think, dear brethren, can you

enter into the magnificence of that great hymn which we are singing through Advent, "O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord, praise Him and magnify Him for ever"? Listen how choir joins itself to choir—the heaven with its thousand songs, earth with its melodies, the roar of the thunder, the murmur of the wind, the rustle of the grass, the clear piping of the birds, the lowing of the cattle, the song of the redeemed, the shout of the warrior, things animate and inanimate, all men and all things turned towards the Lord, to praise Him for what He is, to adore Him because he is glorious, to magnify him because He is King above all. The King of Glory passes on His way, and the flowers spring up beneath His feet, and the creature lifts its drooping head, and man forgets his aches and pains as he swings his crippled limbs into the path of progress, he forgets to fear, he even forgets to beg. God is terrible, God is good, but God is glorious. "O come, let us praise Him and magnify Him for ever."

"But what do you mean?" says the practical man; "put your poetry into prose, and tell me what precise utility there is in praise. I am a plain business man. I cannot stop my work to sing. I have a hard battle to fight within and without. Let me look to duty, and let others talk of glory. I have a soul to be saved, and

no breath to waste on rhapsodies." And yet from end to end the Bible meets him with glory and praise and honour; the Church takes up a large portion of his Sunday devotions with praise. The glory of the Lord streams out, as of old, and floods the sanctuary. Has our practical friend got hold of a right antithesis? Is the useful one thing and the beautiful another? Has beauty no use? Is praise the occupation of the idle? And is glory a revelation for the unemployed?

"The King of Glory." It is a title given to our Blessed Lord, the incarnate King, which we can feel rather than describe; but we recognise that it is too prominently and too frequently put before us that we should neglect it or refuse to try to understand it. What is glory? And what advance have we in the term on simple beauty? Is it a radiance which plays about beauty as joy is a radiance which plays about happiness? Is it an expression of inner life and force which streams out and floods the outward form? The flowers are glorious in their living beauty, the sun is glorious in its fount of ever-kindling light, art is glorious if it reflects inward beauty of thought and design. Aaron's garments were meant to be for glory and for beauty. Heroic actions are glorious when they shed forth a lustre of greatness, or are lit up with the re-

flected praise of right-thinking men ; and God is glorious because He is the Fountain of uncreated light, because in all His works and words and dealings with the children of men there shines forth the expression of His goodness and beauty. And God is also glorious because we pour out upon Him all the wealth of our homage and praise. All that is great and noble and beautiful reflects the power of Almighty God. So that we say, " O God, how wonderful art Thou in Thy works " ; " O Lord, how glorious are Thy works ; Thy thoughts are very deep." Look at the grass beneath our feet, the worm which crawls on the ground, the flowers, the sky, man in his wonderful mechanism of life, wherever God has put His hand there is glory ; and we shall find that glory and beauty are not the useless things which our practical friend took them to be. " To this constitution of things outward," it has been said, " the constitution and mind of man, deranged although they be, still answer from within. Down to the humblest condition of life, down to the lowest and most backward grade of civilisation, the nature of man craves, and seems as it were to cry aloud, for some thing, some sign or token at the least of what is beautiful, in some of the many spheres of mind or sense. This is it that makes the Spitalfields weaver, amidst the mirky streets

of London, train canaries and bullfinches to sing to him at his work, that fills with flower-pots the windows of the poor, that leads the peasant of Pembrokeshire to paint the outside of his cottage in the gayest colours, that prompts in the humblest classes of women a desire for some little personal ornament." It is the work of sin to eradicate the love for beauty. The devil knows the power which lingers round the traces of the footsteps of the King of Glory, and he blots them out with ugliness, and smears them with foulness, that we may forget Him whose name is the King of Glory.

But that we may bring these thoughts closer home to our practical life, let us rather look at the truth which underlies the words of the old Scotch Catechism, "What is the chief end of man? Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever." "The King of Glory" appeals to His creatures for more glory. The lower creation reflects God unconsciously and sheds forth His glory. Man, made in the image and likeness of God, dowered with free-will and the power to choose, is called upon to do this consciously, as a sign that he is taking his place at the head of creation, and that he is working together with God in all the fulness of his powers, in all the capacities of his being.

## I.

And, first of all, the King of Glory asks for the glory of our worship. It is not an easy matter to bring men to realise that this is due to God from them. Men will come sometimes to pray, they will come sometimes to be taught; but how few will come purely and simply to worship? They will come to church, that is, to get, but they will not come to give. But there is a mystery in beauty, in itself; in flowers which no human eye sees, no insect touches, in the buried magnificence only to be extricated by the microscope, hidden for ages from all human eye, and now only known to a few. So, when the cry of the world mounts up to God, when the needs of the poor, the woes of the suffering, the wail of the oppressed, the misery of the sinner, are all powerfully pleading their prayers for aid, when the ante-room of the throne of God is crowded with suffering humanity and all the needs of a pain-stricken world; if we are tempted to ask, 'Why still these groans with alleluias, or stifle these pleadings with praise; why think now of the King of Glory when our whole heart goes out to the Lord of tender compassion?' God would still seem to say, 'Give Me your worship,' for worship

surely is the highest form of assent to His sovereign will; the worship of man, in its measure, is what the ceaseless hum of creation fulfilling its allotted task is in the great *Benedicite* of the world's praise; "Amen, so be it," "Alleluia," we rejoice when we do it, and praise the name of God because it is so comfortable. And even more than this, we offer glory to the King of Glory. He who has given us the mouth to praise Him is entitled to a share of its praises; He who has given us the power to execute works of beauty is entitled to a share of our efforts. We sometimes hear a great deal said against anything like forms and ceremonies in the worship of Almighty God. Certainly a religion which consists merely of forms and ceremonies offered in a mechanical way by a living machine is comparable only to the Buddhist's prayer-wheel, or any other form of unintelligent worship. But when we consider what God is, when we think of the King of Glory in all His beauty, when we think of the wise men in the Gospel tracking the desert simply to fall down and worship the new-born King, while they open their treasures and present unto Him gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, we feel there is a place for worship which is not prayer, and for praise which is not supplication, for beauty offered to the God of

beauty by those who give Him of their best. And here, perhaps, we may pause to correct a common mistake, and mitigate a frequent disappointment. It used to be thought in some quarters—it is thought so still—that beautiful accessories in worship add something to the greater easiness of approach to Almighty God, that he who finds it difficult to approach God in simple prose may be helped to approach Him by music; he who fails to reach Him with the understanding may find it easier to approach by the help of the senses and the things which strike the eye and ear. To a certain extent it may be so, but the fuller the worship which we offer to God, the more difficult in reality it becomes to approach Him worthily; for forms and ceremonies and ritual are the opening of another treasure which demands its own carefulness and its own preparation. And he who trusts to be elevated in spite of himself by the accessories of worship finds himself instead struggling with his own weakness, and left cold and unenlightened in the barrenness of a devotion into which the heart has never entered. Ah! dear friends, we are unlike the King of Glory in this; our glory adds nothing or little to the radiancy of His majesty, for whereas if we search into the things of God we find more and more hidden beauties, if we search beneath our worship we



find so much that is unworthy; the worship of the life to which the conduct gives the lie, bright and glorious words where the heart is cold and irresponsive; things which pretend to be beautiful, but which are disfigured by sin. How little glory there is in our worship, how little of the inner radiancy penetrating through to the expression, how little of the glory and the beauty which belong to the homage of free men, who give willingly of their best to God, Who giveth all. No wonder that the idea of worship has so largely died out amongst us, where formalism is so easy and true homage so difficult; but we must never rest until we have risen above the conception of many people saying their prayers in public, to the grand conception of one united congregation joining in the glorious worship of the glorious King.

## II.

But not only in our worship, but in our work, must we offer glory to the King of Glory. Remember, the world expects from us decency, but God expects glory. God looks not at our work only, but at the way in which we do our work. Look at the mountain valley invaded by some modern industry; the

trees which clothe the mountain side are cut away, the sky is blackened, the river is poisoned, the fish die, the grass withers—what does it matter? Man turns out his machines by the dozen day by day, his coffers are filled, his trade increases. Is not this a type of the way in which we too often push our individual work in disregard of the glory of God? Sad it is to say so, sad that it should be so, but it is true that free man is too often the one blot in the beauty of creation, the one discord in the harmony of the world's hymn of praise. What an ugly thing, for instance, is selfishness. Here is a man pushing his way, regardless of all the little amenities that make life happy and beautiful. He goes to his business in the City; as long as he is comfortable, and they are punctual in their duties, it does not matter to him whether the clerks are prosperous or in sore distress. He has no little word of condolence for their sorrows, no word of sympathy for their joys. He has pushed his way down to the office, he will push his way through the business of the day. One word of caution might have saved a falling career; it is not given. One word of kindness might have eased a troubled heart; it is withheld. In his paper-basket lie the appeals for help; they are many and troublesome. What do the factory-girls want with

holidays?—London is the best place for them. What do boys want with sea-side camps?—it will soon be impossible to get any boys for the office. What need is there for penitentiary work?—things always have been so, and always will be so; he is not going to waste his money. He does not approve of Missions; he thinks the East-end Fund has too much money. Or, perhaps, he can take a virtuous line for once, and say he conscientiously disapproves of it. To withhold a subscription is not always popular, to refuse to subscribe on principle may add to his dignity. His basket gets piled higher and higher, many of his letters follow in the same direction. It is quite safe to say he has many claims, it would not be quite so safe to say how many of those claims are satisfied. The world touches him at countless points. The atmosphere, clouded with business, is relieved by no gleam of benevolence. The stream of evil, as it flows by him, is unflooded with any purifying influence. Selfishness has scorched and dried up all within its reach, and he goes home to his house still wrapped in self, no smile to make home bright, no welcome for children, no sympathy for the daily burden of those who labour to keep home happy. His balance at the bank rises, and heaven is black, and earth is scorched, and the tenderer virtues

wither and die. Depend upon it, dear brethren, it is an offence against the God of Glory to forget all the amenities and brightnesses of life. If Dante put the melancholy in hell, we must feel, at least, that those who destroy joy and tenderness with the gloom of their selfishness are no fit attendants in the train of the King of Glory, whose work is beautiful, and whose footsteps are glorious. Selfishness, of course, has darker patches of evil than this, which it leaves upon the world. The King of Glory goes upon His way, surrounded with those who excel in strength, who have conquered, with those whom His bounty has helped, His mercy has spared, His grace has elevated. There is a career of selfishness which is marked by degradation, and littered with ruin, and branded with death; the selfishness which thrives on the degradation of another's sin. It is a sad and awful sight to see great patches of God's machinery thrown out of gear, work crippled, and lives ruined by the selfishness of sinners. Ah! my brethren, if there be any here, this Advent, who is trading on another's sinfulness, who, reckless of souls for whom Christ died, seeks to draw after him companions of his guilt, to ease the darkness of his sin-swept soul, to cheer with company the intolerable burden of his guilt—if there be any who

thinks to gratify his own selfishness at the price of another's soul—let him pause and think that in addition to the awful penalties which attach to his action, he must also reckon on this—that he is offending against beauty, against the glory of this world of God's creating, which His own hands have made to reflect His majesty and do honour to His truth. Those black scars of sin which disfigure the world, those miserable wastes of creation which show what man has made of man, are the scandal and the shame of our boasted enlightenment, and progress is no progress which leaves untouched this deadly selfishness, and which turns instruction itself into a deadlier implement for robbing a man of his very soul, if it can do anything to add to the ghastly pile of a corrupt selfishness.

Surely, dear brethren, when there are so many spasmodic and ill-advised efforts being made to add to the beauty of the world, in our public monuments, in house decoration, in street architecture ; when there is a craze for the æsthetic and the beautiful, when men think that a veil of poetry is a sufficient cloak for nastiness, or the sacred name of art a condonation for offences against moral purity, it is somewhat ironical that there should be so little care for the beautiful in language, in expression, in subjects which are brought

before the public eye. It would be a startling revelation, I should expect, to many of us, if, after all these years of instruction, we could see the use that is made by many of our children of the great acquirements of reading and writing. It would be a startling revelation if we knew the habitual topics of conversation with large portions, not the lowest, of the population, and the sort of language habitually used. No one can walk many yards in one of our public streets, or even in a country village, without hearing words apparently only chosen because they are vile and ugly, which mean nothing except that they sound foul, which are a sort of devilish converse to the flowers and beauty in which God covers His work, so much foulness thrown off by the mouth which speaks out of the abundance of the evil heart. I ventured to speak plainly from this place in the summer about the scandal of vile pictures exhibited to children in public places in return for their poor pence. They are, I am told, even worse than I supposed them to be; and the only defence of those which are not absolutely vile amounts to this, that they are only morally ugly. There are publications being sold openly to-day, and in respectable places, which are an outrage on elementary decency. Are we treating God fairly, I ask,

dear brethren, in thus allowing or contributing to this overflowing of ungodliness? Remember that with all this there is the craving for unhealthy sensation, the apparently psychological attraction in listening to the discussion of interesting problems, as they are called, which lie well over the borderland of moral health. Remember, also, there is a constant danger of clipping the current coin of language until its beauty and value perish; there is a danger in discarding all efforts after style as unreal and unmeaning. It is a common complaint that few real letters are written to-day worthy of the name. There is a constant danger of casting away refinements of manner and courtesy in behaviour and the niceties of propriety, all which mean so much, as a ritual of beauty which God has put round society, as a safeguard against the approach of grave evils which are always near, and always ready to burst in and overwhelm public manners and public morals. In a world where we worship the King of Glory we can afford to despise no single shred of beauty where we find it; we owe it to God, and we need it for ourselves. For God draws us by beauty to His own loveliness, and lures us from the foulness of sin to the majesty of His own great glory.

## III.

For not only in the outward setting of our life, but much more in our inward character, we must ever seek to be followers of the King of Glory. When S. John in his vision of the blessed in heaven is asked by one of the elders, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes and whence came they?" he says, as hardly able to answer the question or to unravel the mystery of this dazzling throng, "Sir, thou knowest."<sup>1</sup> "It is rather for you to tell me than for me to tell you the secret of a glory so strange and unapproachable." So we feel that in human nature there is a wealth of possibility, a depth of glory, with which it is able to answer to God's creative love and add a fresh lustre to the glory of the King. What a wonderful thing it is to live, to enjoy a human life at all! As the soul newly created wings its way from God to take up its human habitation in the body prepared for it, what a wonderful life opens out! There it stands between two worlds! With the body it touches all this world in which we live: through the senses are brought in beauties of sound, of sight, of touch, of taste and smell, through the mind it links itself on with the past, and to the future; it can read the record

<sup>1</sup> Rev. vii. 13.



of history, it can think, and people the future with images, it can fancy, it can love, it can fear, it can hope and believe. Through the spirit it can reach right up into heaven, all God's grace passes into it from above, and the will sits within to reign, to judge, and to execute. We know what a fearful thing is a man or a woman who has gone wrong in cruelty, in lust, in pride, or in avarice; there is no animal like it in the possible depths of depravity; but, also, thank God, what a wonderful and glorious thing is a man who goes right, in whom all things work together for good. Here, again, there is nothing in creation like it. We have been allowed to see from time to time the possibilities of beauty in a saintly character, where have been exhibited those moral beauties which the King of Glory has made possible to human nature. Here surely is a call to us to rise to the very height of our character. We too often are like men who live on lands which they do not know how to cultivate, who are surrounded with treasures which they do not know how to unearth, or who are as those who sit in front of some grand instrument of music which they do not know how to play. As the creations of God in nature we owe to Him the beauty of our lives. But He has added to the natural gifts which

He has bestowed upon us the further treasures of His grace. If there were some spiritual microscope, as it were, by which we could examine our lives, we should see the wonderful place which grace occupies in them. We should see how religion raises men from earth to heaven, how it liberates some of that glory which ought to play around the children of light. We may instruct and educate, cultivate and develop human nature as much as we please; without religion it will remain robbed of its central light, its inner beauty. It will fail in that glory which it was meant to give back from glory to glory, as it reflects the image of God.

And even more than this. God has His own special glory of character for the individual life, to be struck out by discipline and the blows of chastisement. "These are they who came out of great tribulation" is still the history of those glories of character which we see developed around us. Here God is imparting the virtue of detachment by the gentle severance of ties which bind us down to earth. Here the light of the eyes and the joy of life is being taken away, lest human affection should obscure the perfect love of God. Here the lamb of the flock is being taken on before, that the mother may follow more easily the road which brings to heaven.

Discipline of character, the thorn in the flesh, which seems to be only the minister of Satan sent to buffet, is bringing out beneath the blow the radiance of character which reflects Christ.

Surely a ray from the King of Glory will be found to lighten up all our troubles, and make glad the dark places of the earth. Just as on a stormy day a shaft of light will drop down from the troubled sky, and the earth smiles through her tears of rain, and the dripping rocks are spangled with glittering gleams, and the valleys laugh with joy, and all creation gladdens beneath its touch, so the glory of God lights up with its healing beams the dark places of the world, where trouble and sorrow lie heaviest, and the problem of poverty and the squalor and sins of our large towns lie with their oppressing weight on the conscience and energies of the Church; then out of the gloom, almost the product of it, start forth the magnificent examples of men and women, the brothers and sisters of compassion, who, like their Master before them, go about doing good. It is part of the glory of Christianity which falls with its enlightening beam on the sorrows of the world. So, where sin has left its trail of sadness, and the heart lies bleeding and desolate beneath the burden of its guilt, once

more there falls a ray of glory from the glorious King, and penitence lights up with its own bright beauty the dark places of the soul where innocence has been beaten down by the storm. More than all, the King of Glory knows how to shed abroad, in the hearts that respond to Him, that effulgence of Christian power and the beauty of the higher life which He came to bring. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, send flashing back to heaven the glory which streams upon them from the King of perfect beauty. It may seem strange, almost ironical, amidst the sin and squalor and gloom of the world, to talk of glory and beauty. But a moral depression is the first step to a moral fall; a hopeless estimate of human wickedness will check our genuine enthusiasm for reformation of its many evils; a firm belief in our own moral impotence for good is a sure way to lose all aspirations for better things. God draws us upwards and onwards by beauty; He shows us the true nobility of the higher life, the true dignity of work, and the glory of worship. And beauty, wheresoever we see it, comes to us as a direct message from God, saying, "Lift up your hearts." And we answer out of the gloom, yet out of the glory which still plays around the children of God—

"We lift them up unto the Lord."

IX

THE LORD OF HOSTS



## IX

### THE LORD OF HOSTS

PREACHED IN S. PAUL'S IN ADVENT, 1901.

“The Lord of Hosts is with us ; the God of Jacob is our refuge.”—PSA. xlvi. 7.

HERE is the title of Almighty God on which the Psalmist seems to fall back with a sense of relief, as one stricken and wounded might fall back into the arms of a strong deliverer. It is a sense of that repose on strength which underlies the great title “Comforter.” It is the confident cry of the Creed, “I believe in God the Father Almighty.” “Strong Son of God,” our own poet has said, out of the anguish of a great sorrow, “Though the earth be removed, and the hills be carried into the midst of the sea,” though temptation grapple with us in its dread embrace, and trouble topple towards us with menacing crest—still

the eternal God is "thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." <sup>1</sup>

The Lord of Hosts is with us. If God be for us, who can be against us? It is He at whose summons all created things marshal themselves like the hosts of war, and work together for good, and spread out themselves to be a covering to those who rest in peace under the shelter of His conquering arm.

## I.

"The Lord of Hosts"—the Lord of Sabaoth, as we know it familiarly in our *Te Deum*—is a title with which we are well acquainted throughout the whole Bible. It is the war-cry of the Books of Kings, and is stamped on the utterances of Isaiah and the prophets; in its Hebrew form it finds its way into the New Testament in the Epistle to the Romans and the Epistle of St. Jude, and would seem to represent that idea of strength especially which underlies the sovereignty over things visible and invisible, all agencies, all ministrations and powers; as of a great King marching to war, who is a most strong tower to all them that put their trust in Him, to whom all things in heaven and in earth and under the earth do bow and obey.

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xxxiii. 27.



It is a conception which opens up to us at once such visions as were vouchsafed, for instance, to Micaiah the prophet in the Book of Kings, where the Lord is seen by His servant sitting on His throne, and all the hosts of heaven are standing at His right hand and His left, from Whom go forth ministers of wrath and judgment into the world, and kings move where they are impelled, and the arrow shot at a venture is guided by an unknown hand to be the weapon of destiny. It is the vision of the prophet Isaiah, who sees God in His Majesty adored by veiled seraphs, enthroned in glory and magnified in mystery by the trembling and hiding of all created things. It opens up to us the door through which the inspired evangelist gazed into heaven, where angels pass and repass on missions of love or on messages of wrath, where the vials of God's vengeance are stored with judgment, and blessings flow forth from His hand, where Churches are upheld or are removed, where nations and kings are judged, and all the busy life of the world is "bound by gold chains about the feet of God." "The Lord my God shall come and all the saints with Thee";<sup>1</sup> "For I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and My name is dreadful

<sup>1</sup> Zech, xiv. 5.

among the heathen.”<sup>1</sup> And perhaps we are allowed to see that a conception such as this appealed to God’s people Israel with the greater force, as they realised the poverty of their resources and the weakness of their real position in comparison with what they professed to believe as to the glory and greatness of their destiny as the favoured of the Lord, the peculiar people of the Most High. They on that little strip of land between east and west, they pressed in between the great nations of the ancient world, in imminent danger of being crushed; now in captivity, now restored to a maimed existence—no wonder they turned to Egypt for the help which they could see and appreciate; or made disgraceful compacts with their enemies whose hosts could apply the practical stimulus of threats and oppression.

When we think of these things we can see how this war-cry, “the Lord of Hosts,” must have been not unfrequently the rallying of a vanishing faith, the reassurance of a well-nigh exhausted hope. “The waves of the sea are mighty and rage horribly, but yet the Lord who dwelleth on high is mightier.” The thought of “the Lord of Hosts” turned the soul in upon itself in face of impending danger and the gathering

<sup>1</sup> Malachi i. 14.

armies of the enemy, and bade it remember that they that be with us are more than they that be with them, if faith be true to itself and can rest on the certainty of its own promises.

And this appeal is equally strong to-day. At any moment, if we let ourselves go, we may be tempted to imagine that the hosts of evil are too many for us. It is an easy thing to fold our hands in despair and commit ourselves to counsels of pessimistic hopelessness. 'I work on, but it is of no good; Christianity is doomed, it must be carried away by very weight of numbers. The forces of evil wax stronger and stronger; unbelief is vigorous in its assaults, immorality is rampant, carelessness and indifference abound; scheme after scheme of benevolence and utility seems to fail; evil is bound to have its own way in the strong alliance which it has made with wealth and influence, and, indeed, human nature; why keep back the inrushing tide with a broom? Why waste heart and energy on a foredoomed failure? Let us hold up our hands and yield to numbers.'

Is it not so in the battle of the soul with sin? My brethren, have you not yielded again and again because you say, 'Everybody does the wrong thing or applauds the wrong

cause,' because you are lonely and helpless and singular; you doubt the truth of your own convictions because the public opinion of the moment seems to stultify you? How can you resist when your own weakness is violently wrested towards evil by an overwhelming consensus of those who ought to know, who sin with apparent impunity, and defy God without a pang, and persist without fear of penalty? It is the loneliness of the narrow path which frightens back into the broad way of destruction those who find strength in sinning in company, and profess to believe that death by plague does not signify if it be endured in the companionship born of an epidemic. Surely the sinner in his utter loneliness, the sinner frightened into sin by his own powerlessness, should listen to this glorious title and take hope. "The Lord of Hosts is with us." Michael is at his side with sword of flame, with his glorious war-cry, "Who is like God?" Gabriel brushes him with his wing, as he flashes by on errands of imperial urgency. Legions of angels stand with drawn swords waiting his word of command. The cloud of the saints stoops down from heaven and folds him in its bright embrace; God's beauty and power are all around him, he breathes God's air, he is warmed with God's sun, he

is awed by God's beauty, and cheered by His daily comfort. Is it possible that the mists of sin can be so deadening, the voice of temptation so harsh and abrupt, as to shut off and dull the sense of God's majesty, and of the countless agencies for good which are working all around us, which survive at last, even when sin has done its work, and bring into harbour the poor, unmasted, rifled hull which evil has stripped and robbed of its treasure, and show the exhaustless depths of the power of God, who can not only create life in all its possibilities, but can even more wonderfully restore it by the force of redeeming grace?

## II.

“The Lord of Hosts.” We have only a very faint conception of the multitude of agencies with which God carries on His beneficent rule in this world of His creating. Viewed by us only in the faint indications which come before us, they seem to us to be more universal than we were tempted in our cowardice to believe. The forces of good enormously outweigh and outnumber the forces of evil, but whereas evil presses upon us, and seeks to overwhelm and master the will right up to the supreme usurpation

of possession, good would seem always to respect the imperial nature of man, and to work out nothing, not even his welfare, without the co-operation of the will—unless it be, indeed, that punishment which is penal, where the rebellious will obstinately refuses to accept the inevitable penalty which justice demands and sin has merited. (1) And so we recognise the great army of indirect agents which God uses in the service of man, which are all marshalled under the banner of the Lord of Hosts. History, ancient and modern, is full of the wonders done by what we call “chance,” but which really is the hidden action of God, and His unexplained interference through His creatures. It is the fashion to laugh at the method of God’s interposition between Balaam and his sin, and yet it is S. Peter who points out how God there uses as His agent the dumb creation. Napoleon is hurled out of Russia by fire and frost, just as Titus, centuries before him, found himself powerless to save the doomed temple at Jerusalem by reason of mysterious agencies which fought against him. Here it is a little child which seems to be the absolutely inadequate means of arresting the suicide. Here the writer of experiences in a gaol says, “One of our worst women we ever had in gaol we caught

one day weeping over a daisy." This was God's indirect agent of appeal to her. Here a chance wound, as it seemed, turns the whole career of S. Ignatius; here a chance Gospel which he heard in church is the crisis in the life of S. Francis. Here a chance meeting with a friend, or the sagacity of a horse or dog, or even a book which has turned aside a bullet, has shown the agencies for our protection which God uses all around us; but we congratulate ourselves and call it good luck:—

“ Earth's crammed with heaven,  
And every common bush afire with God,  
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes;  
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.”

(2) But God does not confine His energies to those indirect agencies which we label luck, or help us with those calls upon His creatures which we call “chance.” He employs direct agents as well, who marshal themselves under His banner; His servants which do His pleasure, and minister to those who are heirs of salvation. And first among these we must place His angels. It is difficult to induce people to believe in angels as anything more than a refuge for the religious artist who is seeking for graceful forms, or as a property belonging

to Christmas cards, or, at the most, as a sort of religious fairy suitable to the childhood of the world, and the product of an ill-regulated imagination. If we think this, it would certainly steady our conception, and clear our ideas, if we would trace the record of the ministration of angels right through the pages of the Bible. Angels welcome our Saviour into the world, angels attend His ascending Majesty as He leaves it. Genesis opens the sacred writings with its glimpses of angels, Revelation closes it with their majestic ministrations. Day by day we link them with us in our worship, as we call upon angels and archangels and all the company of heaven to join with us in adoring God. Day by day, as Advent reminds us, we look for the advanced guard of angels, who will prelude the bursting of doom and the session of the Judge. Here, perhaps, you say is a belief which experience can neither affirm nor deny. But, at least, we may say this, that experience is brought face to face with many strange and inexplicable facts, which we name, as we have already considered, loosely as luck, and think that because we have named them we have accounted for them, whereas it is a beautiful belief which the tradition of the Church has always taught, that we have a silent com-



panion, a silent witness of all the secret movements, the hidden as well as open sins of our life, and its triumphs, dangers, and temptations. The guardian angel is one of the most beautiful conceptions of art, which painters have lovingly dwelt upon, in which the angel of our Baptism, guides us as by the precipices and pitfalls of life, until he yields the soul up into the hands of Him who created it. If you will not respect innocence and the glorious beauty of child-life, at least, our Blessed Lord would seem to say, respect that angel, so intimate a companion as to be called *his* angel, his own angel. Reverence that dread unseen agent, who folds his wings about him, and would shield him from harm. There is nothing strange to one who believes in a supernatural world all around him, in the presence of angels, sent forth to minister to those that are heirs of salvation by the Lord God of Hosts, who marshals their armies. But it would be useless to insist on facts which belong to the unseen world to those who resolutely refuse to admit of its existence; and we who know its experiences can hardly put them into shape or make them intelligible to those who do not see. The marvels of astronomy are foolishness to those who disregard the power of the telescope, and the discoveries of the naturalist

are child's tales to those who are inclined to discredit the revelations of the microscope. Our friend in the street, who only believes in what he can see, lives in a very narrow world, only in one corner of this, while the riches and glory of heaven and heavenly things are foolishness unto him, neither can he understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

We descend, at all events, to a ground of more intelligible belief, but perhaps only less fiercely controverted, than the ministry of angels, when we contemplate the Lord God of Hosts using the agencies of men. On next Sunday in this cathedral we shall once more be called upon to take part in the solemn setting forth of men for the direct service of the Almighty. It is true that every child that is born into the world is started with a direct and solemn mission to work in the great army of God. It is true that every child that is baptized is then and there enlisted into the direct service of the Lord of Hosts, manfully to fight under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil. But few will be found to deny that in the ministry God has provided Himself with special agents to do His special work, that He who is attended by all the Hosts of Heaven, and presses all nations into His service, uses the endowments

of reason and grace, which gather round a human will, speak through a human voice, and energise through human actions. They are strong words in our Prayer-book which speak of the Christian ministry as "appointed for the salvation of mankind." And it is because people so little realise the strength of this agency—what it is and what it means—that they deprive themselves of one great help, which God, the Lord of Hosts, has founded for men, who are being sore buffeted in the battle of life. You know how again and again you are appealed to here and elsewhere to send labourers into God's vineyard, not to let the districts of this huge, unwieldy city spread themselves out without at the same time sending to them the living agency of the Church; and yet what do we see? Public-houses full and churches comparatively empty; Satan's ministers energetic and active, surrounded with ready helpers, and God's ministers, alas! too often crippled and powerless. If a man wishes to go the broad way to death, through drunkenness, lust, dissipation, and unbelief, he will find a hundred agents to help him; if he wishes to struggle up to God, why does he feel so powerless and feeble? Why does he seem not to know where to turn? It is too often because he mistrusts, or misunderstands, or fails to find those ministers

of grace which God designed to help him. Satan is wonderfully cunning, and knows the value of a question-begging phrase and the importance of an error which empties truth of all its value. We shall find that the ministration of the clergy is again and again robbed of its efficacy because false conceptions have been formed of their aim and mission in the counsels and plans of God. If you ask people, Of what use are the clergy? some will tell you that they are useful as setting a good example in the place where they are stationed, that they are set as lights in the world, as a city set on a hill, as the salt of the earth. But this is only a very small portion of the truth—this is the duty of all Christians, not of the clergy alone. The idea of a man who poses as a good example dressed in black clothes, would only result in making the man himself a self-conscious hypocrite, and too often would repel those in whom human nature resists the too obviously didactic life of a moral improver. God forbid that we should ever shut our eyes to the immense, the utter importance of a clergy whose lives are the most eloquent exponents of what they teach, who recommend by gentleness, purity, and devotion the supreme claims of the religion of Jesus Christ. No doubt the minister of Christ ought to stand high (if possible, the highest) in the setting forth of

the beauties of Christian character. He is the good man, but he is more. Then, people say, he is set in his place to preach, to show people the way of salvation. Most certainly he is. He is a preacher; but, again, he is more than a preacher. A preacher may be a remote being who dispenses Divine charity with all the aloofness of the unpractical philanthropist of S. James's Epistle. He says to the poor sinner shivering in his lonely guilt, "Be warmed"; he says to the starving soul fed on the husks of swine, "Be filled." But he gives him no clothing to keep him from the cold, no food for the awful hunger of his soul. And once more, what does it profit? What good are the thousand sermons which are preached to-day doing, unless they are followed by something more practical? Our Blessed Lord's advice to His clergy is, not say to them "Be ye warmed and be ye fed," but "Give ye them to eat." The clergy, the ministers of the Lord of Hosts, are stewards; they have something to give. And what have they to give? First, they have to give good advice. A cheap and easy thing, you say, a poor treasure in itself. My brethren, not so, if it be the personal advice for definite needs. Why don't we use our clergy more, not keep them at arm's length in the pulpit, but seek their advice? If you were ill, you would not attend a medical

lecture in the hospital, and pick up what scraps of information you could as to the healing of your disease, but you would seek the doctor, and tell him your case, and seek his help. This is what God meant His clergy to be, His agents, His ministers to deal with the individual wants of sinful men, and bring them to Him. And in saying this, see the goodness of the Lord of Hosts, in choosing men to be His agents in these matters, and not the bright angels ; men who can speak, men who can give an answer back, men who can sympathise, men who can weep and laugh, and sorrow and rejoice. The very human element in the ministry, which sometimes you so despise, was ordained by God to attract and help those whose chief enemy has been the infirmity of their own humanity. But God does not stop at making His clergy ministers of good advice. Here again any good man could do this, but He does store them with certain privileges for the relief of mankind, those means of grace which would more than countervail the means of death with which the world is so amply stored. The ministers of Christ have something to give. We are sometimes tempted to think that the message which Christ gave to His Apostles to dispense was a very simple one after all, and that ages of pious accretion have added picturesque, edifying, and imposing

accessories, which are in no sense necessary nor part of the original deposit of Faith. Certainly, as regards the main position, nothing can be more contrary to the fact. Open the records in which the Evangelists have committed to writing the traditions of our Lord's teaching, and there we find ordinances, such as Baptism and Holy Communion, taking their place amongst the very essentials of Christian life. We give the enemy an unfair advantage, we are defrauding men of a real benefit provided for them, if we treat Christ's methods as open questions to be accepted or ignored at will. The Lord God of Hosts, who rules over the armies of hell, and keeps the hosts of evil from overwhelming the world, has provided for our help and comfort a body of men intrusted with means of grace which it is theirs to dispense. This is why we welcome and encourage with our presence and prayers those who come forward, as on next Sunday, to consecrate themselves to the service of God and the service of humanity. They all form part of the ministry of mercy, and the service of strength, which He vouchsafes to us, not as a human barrier between us and Him, but as a link in the chain of blessing wherewith He cheers our loneliness and strengthens our weakness. O how glorious is the army of God which encircles the children

of His love, where meanest men and brightest angels and all creatures whom He bends to His work carry on unceasingly the war of the Lord, whose bitter strife shall end only on that day when God shall be all in all, and death be swallowed up in victory.

### III.

Bear with me, my brethren, if I appeal to-day for further recruits for the army of the glorious King. Again and again we clergy hear the cry—"Ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi." If you think so, come to our side, and share our burden, and help us to fight the battle of the Lord. I suppose with all its faults there never was an age when people were more in earnest than they are in the present to redress the evils of life, to alleviate suffering, to stop injustice, to help poor suffering humanity in its awful struggle with the ills which seem at times to be almost irresistible. Men and women and children, boys at school, young men at the Universities, in the warehouses, soldiers in the Army, sailors in the Navy, are all coming, here a few and there a few, to join the army of the Lord of Hosts in the battle against sin. My brethren, it is only right to ask you on this Sunday,



so near Christmas, this Ember Week, which means so much to many a man who has offered himself to God, what are you doing for the work of the Lord of Hosts? Surely there is no one who can dare to stand altogether on one side at such a time as this. There are agencies for good languishing for want of support, men and women who are fighting hand to hand with the enemy, who have to stop and beg for the sinews of war. The price of one dinner party, a tithe of the money spent on dress, a small proportion of the sum which vanishes on luxuries, would make glad the heart of many a toiler, who wistfully wonders where help is to be found for those agencies of good which are just beginning to grapple with the hosts of evil. Oh the selfishness of a life where self sits as a tyrant, to which everybody must contribute. We used to be told as children, whether rightly or wrongly, of the villages depopulated and fertility destroyed to make a hunting-forest for our first Norman king; it is only a type of the unremitting, remorseless callousness of the soul which pursues the chase of self-gratification, a stranger to the sterner joys of duty done, to the joy which gladdens even angels for a soul saved, a lost sheep brought home again, a prodigal regained. And yet the subscription list and the answer to appeals may easily become the hush-

money to a troublesome conscience, with which we buy ourselves off from work which we ought to do with a payment which may cost us a trifling inconvenience, and even be transferred to the credit of selfishness in the applause of apparent beneficence. The Lord of Hosts asks for personal service. There is no one so situated as to be absolutely without influence, however small that influence may be. When the wall of Jerusalem was rebuilt in troublous times, Nehemiah tells us of those who repaired it, every one over against his house. Here is the place where our first and main help is to be given to the armies of the Lord of Hosts. We groan and mourn about the growing recklessness of the times, about the utter want of discipline in all ranks of society. What are we doing for discipline at home? Have fathers and mothers any right to slip off the burden of authority which God has given them, or to stultify by example the feeble and insincere precepts which propriety extracts from them? Would it not be something if instead of protesting against the desecration of Sunday, we gave up that Sunday dinner party which makes it impossible for the servants to go to church; or those games which detract from the solemnity of the day, shock the thoughtful, encourage the careless, and add one more day to the mono-

tony of the same pursuit of frivolity unrelieved by seriousness? The next time that we mourn the decay of morals let us have a good look round our own drawing-room, and the books which the circulating library provides to suit public taste. The next time we are shocked by youthful or childish depravity, instead of blaming the age, let us ask ourselves what we have done to protest against an educational system in which religion either finds no place, or is dishonoured, or at least suspected. God's army moves forward under the conquering banner of the Lord of Hosts; He owns no divided empire, He fears no foe, the very ungodly He uses as His sword—and who hath resisted His will? It is His appeal to you now to come to His side, as He rides forth conquering and to conquer. It will be your shame and confusion if the recording angel publishes abroad the indictment of your cowardice, and the sentence of your sloth—“Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof: because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Judges v. 23.

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